

AMONG THIS WEEK'S CONTRIBUTORS

Masolino d'Amico is Professor of English at the University of Rome.
 Peter Avery is the translator, with John Heath-Stubbs, of *The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*, 1979.
 Julian Balick is lecturer in Religious Studies at King's College, London.
 Neil Corcoran's study, *David Jones, The Song of Deeds*, was published in 1982.
 P. V. Dunckwerts is Emeritus Professor of Chemical Engineering at the University of Cambridge.
 Michael Davis is the editor of *The Diaries of Evelyn Waugh*, 1976.
 Dick Davis's translation of a twelfth-century Persian poem, *The Conference of the Birds*, by Farid udDin Attar, was co-written with his wife Afkham Darbani.
 Denis Donoghue is Henry James Professor of English and American Letters at the University of New York.
 Warwick Edwards is a lecturer in Music at the University of Glasgow.
 Jacqueline Fear's *The Little Red School House on the Reservation* will be published shortly.
 Michael Gilsenan is Professor of Contemporary Arab Studies at the University of Oxford.
 J. D. Gurney is University Lecturer in Persian History at the Oriental Institute, Oxford.
 Martin Hinds is a Fellow of Trinity Hall, Cambridge.
 Chris Humphries is the author of the *Hamlyn Guide to Trees of Britain and Europe*, 1981.
 Robert Irwin's *History of the Mamluk Sultanate of Egypt and Syria* will appear in 1985.
 Hugh Kennedy's *The Early Abbasid Caliphate* appeared in 1981.
 Donald MacIntyre is the Labour editor of the *Sunday Times*.
 Arthur Marwick's most recent book is *British Society Since 1945*, 1983.
 John Orr is a lecturer in Sociology at the University of Edinburgh.
 David Pannick is a Fellow of All Souls College, Oxford.
 Simon Rae's poems appeared in Faber's *Poetry Introduction* 5, 1982.
 Peter Reading's most recent book of poetry, *Diplomatic*, appeared last year.
 Laurie Taylor's *In the Underworld* was published recently.
 George Thelmer is the editor of *Index on Censorship*.
 F. M. L. Thompson's books include *The Rise of Suburbia*, 1982.
 Jennifer Uglow is editor of the *Macmillan Biographical Dictionary of Women*, 1983.
 Jeremy Waldron is a lecturer in Political Theory at the University of Edinburgh.
 Bernard Wasserstein is a Professor of History at Brandeis University.
 Malcolm Yapp is the author of *Strategies of British India: Iran and Afghanistan 1798-1850*, 1980.

INFORMATION, PLEASE

Florence Lockwood: present ownership of the copyright of unpublished diaries kept by her during the First World War.
 Jill Liddington.
 17 Bankhouse Lane, Salterhebble, Halifax HX3 0QL, West Yorkshire.

Herbert Dyce Murphy (1879-1971), British Intelligence agent and Arctic/Antarctic explorer; any information; for an article.
 Stephen Murray-Smith.
 School of Education, University of Melbourne, Parkville, Victoria 3052, Australia.

Anthony Powell: any information relevant to a full bibliography of his writings, especially concerning contributions to lesser-known periodicals.
 G. P. Lilley.
 St David's University College, Lampeter, Dyfed.

Sir Charles Hercules Read (1857-1929), Keeper of Medieval and Later Antiquities in the British Museum: whereabouts of personal papers and any living descendants.
 Cleota Reed.
 24 Kensington Park Gardens, London, W11.

Caroline Anne Bowles Southey (1796-1854): any letters, papers or information about her, especially concerning her life at Buckland.
 Margaret Malison.
 Heath Cottage, Boar's Hill, Oxford.

W. H. Sleeman, suppressor of Thuggee: letters, photographs and other memorabilia; for a biography.
 D. C. Baker.
 8 Butt Lane, Milton, Cambridge CB4 4DG.

Rose E. Pool (1905-71): letters, photographs, unpublished manuscripts and copies of her published collections and translations, in both English and Dutch; also personal reminiscences; for a biography.
 Anneke Buys.
 Dintel 20, 7333 MC Apeldoorn, The Netherlands.

Jonathan Swift: present whereabouts (if still extant) of lifelike group portrait of five members of the Whig Junto - Somers, Wharton, Halifax, Orford and Sunderland - together with Godolphin and Marlborough; described by Swift in *The Examiner* for January 25, 1711, as "now in the Country [where it] hangs in a Hall, among the Pictures of Cromwell, Bradshaw, Ireton and some other Predecessors"; also location of the "Hall".
 Frank H. Ellis.
 Smith College, Northampton MA 01063, USA.

HMS Warrior: built 1860; any detailed photographs in private hands to assist in restoration of the decoration (other than the figurehead).
 Richard J. Barnett.
 Ships Preservation Trust, Custom House, Victoria Terrace, Hartlepool, Cleveland.

Lascelles Wraxhall: his translation of Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables* (Hurst and Blacket, 1862) and the role of Alphonse Esquiros as collaborator; whereabouts of any correspondence or other relevant documents (especially contract with translator).
 A. R. W. Jamsa.
 Department of French Studies, The University, Manchester M13 9PL.

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 1815, 1816, 1817, 1818,
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 1823, 1824, 1825, 1826,
 1827, 1828, 1829, 1830,
 1831, 1832, 1833, 1834,
 1835, 1836, 1837, 1838,
 1839, 1840, 1841, 1842,
 1843, 1844, 1845, 1846,
 1847, 1848, 1849, 1850,
 1851, 1852, 1853, 1854,
 1855, 1856, 1857, 1858,
 1859, 1860, 1861, 1862,
 1863, 1864, 1865, 1866,
 1867, 1868, 1869, 1870,
 1871, 1872, 1873, 1874,
 1875, 1876, 1877, 1878,
 1879, 1880, 1881, 1882,
 1883, 1884, 1885, 1886,
 1887, 1888, 1889, 1890,
 1891, 1892, 1893, 1894,
 1895, 1896, 1897, 1898,
 1899, 1900, 1901, 1902,
 1903, 1904, 1905, 1906,
 1907, 1908, 1909, 1910,
 1911, 1912, 1913, 1914,
 1915, 1916, 1917, 1918,
 1919, 1920, 1921, 1922,
 1923, 1924, 1925, 1926,
 1927, 1928, 1929, 1930,
 1931, 1932, 1933, 1934,
 1935, 1936, 1937, 1938,
 1939, 1940, 1941, 1942,
 1943, 1944, 1945, 1946,
 1947, 1948, 1949, 1950,
 1951, 1952, 1953, 1954,
 1955, 1956, 1957, 1958,
 1959, 1960, 1961, 1962,
 1963, 1964, 1965, 1966,
 1967, 1968, 1969, 1970,
 1971, 1972, 1973, 1974,
 1975, 1976, 1977, 1978,
 1979, 1980, 1981, 1982,
 1983, 1984, 1985, 1986,
 1987, 1988, 1989, 1990,
 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994,
 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998,
 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002,
 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006,
 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010,
 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014,
 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018,
 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022,
 2023, 2024, 2025, 2026,
 2027, 2028, 2029, 2030,
 2031, 2032, 2033, 2034,
 2035, 2036, 2037, 2038,
 2039, 2040, 2041, 2042,
 2043, 2044, 2045, 2046,
 2047, 2048, 2049, 2050,
 2051, 2052, 2053, 2054,
 2055, 2056, 2057, 2058,
 2059, 2060, 2061, 2062,
 2063, 2064, 2065, 2066,
 2067, 2068, 2069, 2070,
 2071, 2072, 2073, 2074,
 2075, 2076, 2077, 2078,
 2079, 2080, 2081, 2082,
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 2087, 2088, 2089, 2090,
 2091, 2092, 2093, 2094,
 2095, 2096, 2097, 2098,
 2099, 2100, 2101, 2102,
 2103, 2104, 2105, 2106,
 2107, 2108, 2109, 2110,
 2111, 2112, 2113, 2114,
 2115, 2116, 2117, 2118,
 2119, 2120, 2121, 2122,
 2123, 2124, 2125, 2126,
 2127, 2128, 2129, 2130,
 2131, 2132, 2133, 2134,
 2135, 2136, 2137, 2138,
 2139, 2140, 2141, 2142,
 2143, 2144, 2145, 2146,
 2147, 2148, 2149, 2150,
 2151, 2152, 2153, 2154,
 2155, 2156, 2157, 2158,
 2159, 2160, 2161, 2162,
 2163, 2164, 2165, 2166,
 2167, 2168, 2169, 2170,
 2171, 2172, 2173, 2174,
 2175, 2176, 2177, 2178,
 2179, 2180, 2181, 2182,
 2183, 2184, 2185, 2186,
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 2191, 2192, 2193, 2194,
 2195, 2196, 2197, 2198,
 2199, 2200, 2201, 2202,
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 2207, 2208, 2209, 2210,
 2211, 2212, 2213, 2214,
 2215, 2216, 2217, 2218,
 2219, 2220, 2221, 2222,
 2223, 2224, 2225, 2226,
 2227, 2228, 2229, 2230,
 2231, 2232, 2233, 2234,
 2235, 2236, 2237, 2238,
 2239, 2240, 2241, 2242,
 2243, 2244, 2245, 2246,
 2247, 2248, 2249, 2250,
 2251, 2252, 2253, 2254,
 2255, 2256, 2257, 2258,
 2259, 2260, 2261, 2262,
 2263, 2264, 2265, 2266,
 2267, 2268, 2269, 2270,
 2271, 2272, 2273, 2274,
 2275, 2276, 2277, 2278,
 2279, 2280, 2281, 2282,
 2283, 2284, 2285, 2286,
 2287, 2288, 2289, 2290,
 2291, 2292, 2293, 2294,
 2295, 2296, 2297, 2298,
 2299, 2300, 2301, 2302,
 2303, 2304, 2305, 2306,
 2307, 2308, 2309, 2310,
 2311, 2312, 2313, 2314,
 2315, 2316, 2317, 2318,
 2319, 2320, 2321, 2322,
 2323, 2324, 2325, 2326,
 2327, 2328, 2329, 2330,
 2331, 2332, 2333, 2334,
 2335, 2336, 2337, 2338,
 2339, 2340, 2341, 2342,
 2343, 2344, 2345, 2346,
 2347, 2348, 2349, 2350,
 2351, 2352, 2353, 2354,
 2355, 2356, 2357, 2358,
 2359, 2360, 2361, 2362,
 2363, 2364, 2365, 2366,
 2367, 2368, 2369, 2370,
 2371, 2372, 2373, 2374,
 2375, 2376, 2377, 2378,
 2379, 2380, 2381, 2382,
 2383, 2384, 2385, 2386,
 2387, 2388, 2389, 2390,
 2391, 2392, 2393, 2394,
 2395, 2396, 2397, 2398,
 2399, 2400, 2401, 2402,
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 2407, 2408, 2409, 2410,
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 2443, 2444, 2445, 2446,
 2447, 2448, 2449, 2450,
 2451, 2452, 2453, 2454,
 2455, 2456, 2457, 2458,
 2459, 2460, 2461, 2462,
 2463, 2464, 2465, 2466,
 2467, 2468, 2469, 2470,
 2471, 2472, 2473, 2474,
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 2483, 2484, 2485, 2486,
 2487, 2488, 2489, 2490,
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 2495, 2496, 2497, 2498,
 2499, 2500, 2501, 2502,
 2503, 2504, 2505, 2506,
 2507, 2508, 2509, 2510,
 2511, 2512, 2513, 2514,
 2515, 2516, 2517, 2518,
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 2639, 2640, 2641, 2642,
 2643, 2644, 2645, 2646,
 2647, 2648, 2649, 2650,
 2651, 2652, 2653, 2654,
 2655, 2656, 2657, 2658,
 2659, 2660, 2661, 2662,
 2663, 2664, 2665, 2666,
 2667, 2668, 2669, 2670,
 2671, 2672, 2673, 2674,
 2675, 2676, 2677, 2678,
 2679, 2680, 2681, 2682,
 2683, 2684, 2685, 2686,
 2687, 2688, 2689, 2690,
 2691, 2692, 2693, 2694,
 2695, 2696, 2697, 2698,
 2699, 2700, 2701, 2702,
 2703, 2704, 2705, 2706,
 2707, 2708, 2709, 2710,
 2711, 2712, 2713, 2714,
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 2735, 2736, 2737, 2738,
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 2743, 2744, 2745, 2746,
 2747, 2748, 2749, 2750,
 2751, 2752, 2753, 2754,
 2755, 2756, 2757, 2758,
 2759, 2760, 2761, 2762,
 2763, 2764, 2765, 2766,
 2767, 2768, 2769, 2770,
 2771, 2772, 2773, 2774,
 2775, 2776, 2777, 2778,
 2779, 2780, 2781, 2782,
 2783, 2784, 2785, 2786,
 2787, 2788, 2789, 2790,
 2791, 2792, 2793, 2794,
 2795, 2796, 2797, 2798,
 2799, 2800, 2801, 2802,
 2803, 2804, 2805, 2806,
 2807, 2808, 2809, 2810,
 2811, 2812, 2813, 2814,
 2815, 2816, 2817, 2818,
 2819, 2820, 2821, 2822,
 2823, 2824, 2825, 2826,
 2827, 2828, 2829, 2830,
 2831, 2832, 2833, 2834,
 2835, 2836, 2837, 2838,
 2839, 2840, 2841, 2842,
 2843, 2844, 2845, 2846,
 2847, 2848, 2849, 2850,
 2851, 2852, 2853, 2854,
 2855, 2856, 2857, 2858,
 2859, 2860, 2861, 2862,
 2863, 2864, 2865, 2866,
 2867, 2868, 2869, 2870,
 2871, 2872, 2873, 2874,
 2875, 2876, 2877, 2878,
 2879, 2880, 2881, 2882,
 2883, 2884, 2885, 2886,
 2887, 2888, 2889, 2890,
 2891, 2892, 2893, 2894,
 2895, 2896, 2897, 2898,
 2899, 2900, 2901, 2902,
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 2951, 2952, 2953, 2954,
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 2967, 2968, 2969, 2970,
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 2979, 2980, 2981, 2982,
 2983, 2984, 2985, 2986,
 2987, 2988, 2989, 2990,
 2991, 2992, 2993, 2994,
 2995, 2996, 2997, 2998,
 2999, 3000, 3001, 3002,
 3003, 3004, 3005, 3006,
 3007, 3008, 3009, 3010,
 3011, 3012, 3013, 3014,
 3015, 3016, 3017, 3018,
 3019, 3020, 3021, 3022,
 3023, 3024, 3025, 3026,
 3027, 3028, 3029, 3030,
 3031, 3032, 3033, 3034,
 3035, 3036, 3037, 3038,
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 3051, 3052, 3053, 3054,
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 3059, 3060, 3061, 3062,
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 3107, 3108, 3109, 3110,
 3111, 3112, 3113, 3114,
 3115, 3116, 3117, 3118,
 3119, 3120, 3121, 3122,
 3123, 3124, 3125, 3126,
 3127, 3128, 3129, 3130,
 3131, 3132, 31

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Contents

- BIOGRAPHY 1063–4. ENGLISH LITERATURE 1045. FICTION 1065–6. HISTORY 1062. HISTORY OF IDEAS 1061. LITERARY THEORY 1058. MODERN HISTORY 1051. PHILOSOPHY 1059–60. POETRY 1043–4. ROLAND 1047. POLITICS 1048–9. RELIGION 1052. SOCIAL STUDIES 1046. UNITED STATES 1050
- DONALD DAVIE Peter Ackroyd: *T. S. Eliot*
Ronald Bush: *T. S. Eliot – A study in character and style*
Tony Pinkney: *Women in the Poetry of T. S. Eliot – A psychoanalytic approach* 1043–4
- LACHLAN MACKINNON Robert S. Dupree: *Allen Tate and the Augustinian Imagination – A study of the poetry* 1044
- BRIAN VICKERS Keir Elam: *Shakespeare's Universe of Discourse – Language games in the comedies* 1045
- LAURIE TAYLOR John Alderson: *Law and Disorder*
John Lea and Jack Young: *What is to be done about Law and Order?* 1046
- ROLAND LITTLEWOOD Anthony Clare: *In the Psychiatrist's Chair* 1046
- ABRAHAM BRUMBERG John B. de Weydenthal, Bruce D. Porter and Kevin Devlin: *The Polish Drama – 1980–1982* 1047
- EDWARD N. LUTTWAK James H. Wylie: *The Influence of British Arms – An analysis of British military intervention since 1956* 1048
- MALISE RUTHVEN Caroline Blackwood: *On the Perimeter* 1048
- GORDON K. LEWIS Raymond Carr: *Puerto Rico – A colonial experiment* 1049
- DENIS SMYTH Robert Graham: *Spain – Change of a nation* 1049
- EDWARD MENDELSON Peter Conrad: *The Art of the City – Views and versions of New York* 1050
- SEAN FRENCH John Lahr: *Automatic Vaudeville – Essays on star turns* 1050
- JEREMY NOAKES Richard F. Hamilton: *Who Voted for Hitler?*
Thomas Childers: *The Nazi Voter – The social foundations of Fascism in Germany, 1919–1933* 1051
- PAUL KENNEDY F. L. Carsten: *Britain and the Weimar Republic – The British documents* 1051
- OWEN CHADWICK David L. Edwards: *Christian England – Volume three. From the eighteenth century to the First World War* 1052
- ALEC VIDLER Clyde F. Crews: *English Catholic Modernism – Maude Petre's way of faith* 1052
- RICHARD INLEDON "By a priest": *We Believe – A simple commentary on "The Catechism of the Christian Doctrine approved by the Archbishops and Bishops of England and Wales"* 1052
- BLAKE MORRISON From *The Inquisitor* (poem) 1053
- LAURENCE LERNER A Quotation (poem) 1053
- CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS American notes 1054
- Among this week's contributors 1054
- Letters on Roman Foreign Policy, Editing Yeats, A Blake Poem, etc 1055
- Commentary
Under the Volcano (Various cinemas) 1056
- GALEN STRAWSON Shakespeare Festival (Stratford, Ontario) 1056
- ROGER WARREN Leos Janáček: *Osud* (Coliseum) 1057
- GRAHAM BRADSHAW Arthur Miller: *A View from the Bridge* (Young Vic) 1057
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- ROBERT BARNARD A Chorus from Oedipus Rex (poem) 1063
- GILLIAN AVERY Janet Morgan: *Agatha Christie – A biography* 1063–4
- CHRISTOPHER HAWTREE Jane Alken Hodge: *The Private World of George Heyer* 1064
- DAVID MONTROSE Ronald Frame: *Winter Journey* 1065
- TOBY FITTON William Boyd: *Stars and Bars* 1065
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- MAGGIE GEE Malachi Whitaker: *The Crystal Fountain and other stories* 1065
- PATRICIA CRAIG Manuel Puig: *Betrayed by Rita Hayworth. Kiss of the Spider Woman* 1066
- Among this week's contributors 1067
- Fifty years on 1967
- Author, Author 1067
- Index of books reviewed 1067
- Crossword 1068

Cover picture

"Balloon Seller" on show in the exhibition *Photographs from South America by Douglas Frost* The Camera Club, 8 Great Newport Street, London WC2 until September 30.

The modernist malgré lui

Donald Davie

PETER ACKROYD

T. S. Eliot

372pp. Hamish Hamilton. £12.50.

0241 113490

RONALD BUSH

T. S. Eliot: A study in character and style

287pp. Oxford University Press. £17.50.

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TONY PINKNEY

Women in the Poetry of T. S. Eliot: A

psychoanalytic approach

156pp. Macmillan. £20.

0333 347064

It would not be particularly spiteful to wonder if the flood of books about Eliot, a river that has been in full spate for as long as any of us can remember, doesn't have its source in the commonplaceness of this poet's personality. Being commonplaceness, Eliot's personality is one that almost anyone can sympathize with. If we add, "except of course that he was very intelligent", the exception will seem to some to qualify the assertion to the point where it has no force. But this doesn't follow: the exceptional intelligence moved along tracks, and within categories (for the most part binary and opposed), that were indeed commonplace, not just in the United States but also in Britain, through the years – 1884 to 1914 – when Eliot was growing up. Indeed, more lamentably, the radical either/or (in one gross formulation, impulsive yearning versus civic order) is what young and energetic minds still, in 1984, experience as the choice before them – which explains why Eliot's arcane and fastidious poetry has become, as it did even in his lifetime, a talismanic sacred deposit which hardly anyone is brave enough to question. Perhaps because Peter Ackroyd comes to Eliot after a study of Pound, he is brave enough to raise the question; and though he does so only suavely and by implication, it is this that makes his biography necessary and important.

Recently, other wary champions of Eliot, recognizing the vulnerable commonplaceness of his ideas and of the antinomies which he dredged from among them, have claimed for him, over and above his intelligence in the ordinary sense (sharp and probing), another intelligence, more fluctuant and fed from deeper sources, which they call – and without some prompting from the poet's own later lectures and essays – "musical". Ackroyd makes this claim. But the truth is surely that

Eliot had at best a scrupulous ear for *vers libre* – itself, so some would argue, an inherently coarse and compromised medium; in strict metre Hardy, and in true *vers libre* Pound, went far beyond him. And after all to say of Eliot that he was commonplaceness is only a rude way of saying that he was representative. It is entertaining therefore to see one commentator after another insist on the specialness of Eliot's tormented passage through life. In fact what they see in that mirror is only their own torments (real ones, we need not doubt) writ large and writ special.

To be particular: no one up to now has proved to us that growing up in St Louis from 1888 to 1906 was in any essential respects, as the young Eliot experienced it, different from growing up through the same span of years in Leeds or Newcastle or Liverpool. To be sure, there were indeed special dimensions to the St Louis experience – as the poet's neglected father Henry Ware Eliot encountered them, in brushes with the still not wholly extirpated redskins; but there is no evidence that the poet shared these experiences with his father, even vicariously. And as for the portentous matter of the Mississippi that washes by St Louis, Ronald Bush (if not Peter Ackroyd) agrees that the celebration of this in *The Dry Salvages* is at best on the level of Paul Robeson, willed and external, in no way comparable with the presence that the great river attains to in the pages of Mark Twain. The young Eliot grew up in St Louis cocooned by his mother from that rude actuality in a dream of Boston, and behind Boston of an imaginary, largely Italianate, Europe.

Undoubtedly Eliot's life-record might not seem so commonplace (read, "respectable") if we were allowed access to documents not already fitted and filleted for public consumption. Ackroyd lets us know that the Eliot estate continues to stone-wall; he has not been permitted to quote from Eliot's unpublished work or from his correspondence – a prohibition that commits him to the very unsatisfactory procedure of telling us about poems from Eliot's juvenilia that he cannot put before us, even in part. Inevitably the suspicion grows, perhaps quite unjustly, that the material withheld from us contains outrageously explicit revelations. If the overt life and character are so commonplace, the buried life and person must be the opposite – an illogical but natural deduction. In the meantime the prohibition provides a field-day for interpretations called "psychoanalytic", of which Tony Pinkney's slim book is, despite its misleadingly reductive

title, an unusually sprightly and strenuous example. The truth may well be that the psycho-cultural stresses that bore in on Yeats and Pound are, just because they are less typical, more interesting than those which conditioned Eliot. But psychoanalytic theory, remorselessly generalizing, cannot afford to think so. An Eliot who is ourselves writ large is a spectacle as consoling to psychoanalysis as to "the common reader".

Psychoanalytic criticism has lately become sophisticated and revisionist. If not by way of Jacques Lacan (to whom Pinkney devotes two respectful pages), then by way of Melanie Klein and D. W. Winnicott (to whom Pinkney is more subservient), Freud himself is nowadays treated as the patriarchal pioneer whose findings – however deserving of respect in the perspective of history – must be regarded as decisively outdistanced and cancelled by later researches. "Researches" and also "findings" must always in these contexts be inside inverted commas; for of course what we have, as we move from Sigmund Freud to Anna Freud, thence to Melanie Klein and (with genuflections towards Lacan) to Winnicott, is not a science gradually refining itself but on the contrary one mythological schema superseding another. Mythology undoubtedly has its uses; and Pinkney's Kleinian pre-Oedipal mythology illuminates Eliot's prose-poem, "Hysteria", as Freud's Oedipal mythology could not. ("Hysteria", significantly, gets in Bush's voluminous book no notice at all.) All the same, mythology is what we are dealing with; so long as we remember that, Pinkney's mythology does more than Bush's or Ackroyd's to make interesting – I will not say, to elucidate – the poet whom Randall Jarrell many years ago declared, of all modern poets, the one who most cried out for psychoanalytic attention.

The commonplaceness, of the sensibility, and of the lived witness; that we are forced back to. Bush at times wearsisome length establishes how the overtly "modernist" Eliot gave way, step by step in the years after *The Waste Land*, to the incantatory poet whose first and perhaps last hero was Edgar Allan Poe. The seemingly modernist poet of *The Waste Land* and *Poems, 1920* appears in the perspective as an artfully provisional and temporary persona – not fabricated, as some have thought, at the behest of Ezra Pound, but rather a product of that intelligence, Eliot's which showed itself at this as at all times predominantly an intelligence for manoeuvre, for polemical and rhetorical strategies. There is no question of betrayal, of "selling out"; on

this showing Eliot's was throughout a late-Romantic sensibility, which adroitly cornered the market for a time by pretending to be otherwise, which then (the market once cornered) threw off the wraps and re-appeared in its true colours. And after all we hardly need Bush's close arguments to prove this; for how else can we explain how the author of *The Waste Land* should have become, as a middle-aged publisher, the patron of Edwin Muir?

This view of Eliot's career, though it is a possibility opened up by all of these books, is not explicitly advanced by any of them. Ackroyd and Bush and Pinkney are all prepared to believe that Eliot's propaganda for a dry and impersonal otherness in the artifact answered to an urgent psychical need in himself, even as a no less urgent need for the incantatory was undermining it. It is Pinkney who does best with this, grounding his arguments on the one writer in whom Kleinian psychology intersected for a time with trained connoisseurship; that is to say, Adrian Stokes. Pinkney remarks, as we must all acknowledge once it is pointed out to us, that in Stokes's by now notorious distinction in the art of sculpture between carving and moulding, the second alternative – moulding, or modelling – though overtly it is offered as on a par with carving is, in the event, consistently discredited. Pinkney's point, if I read him aright, is that Stokes's therapy with Melanie Klein was designed to, and did, put him right about this, and restored a balance. In Pinkney's book there is a great deal of palaver hereabouts, having to do with projection and introjection of the mother's breast, and of the father's or the male infant's penis. But behind all this optional mythopoeia an important distinction is being made, and one that undoubtedly has as much bearing on the good poet Eliot as on the bad poet Stokes: a distinction between one and another way in which the artist, whether sculptor or poet, regards the rudely natural material that he has to fashion into art.

The obvious and yet misleading dilemma presents itself: he either surrenders to that material, or else he masters it. All the evidence we have suggests on the contrary that the successful artistic transaction has the paradoxical character of mastery-by-way-of-surrender. And many of our currently heated debates of theory, more importantly our different valuations of particular artistic achievements, turn on how much weight we give, in this compound, to surrender against mastery, mastery against surrender. If some people choose to take as the prototype of this mastery-surrender

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compound the feeding infant's experience of the maternal breast, that is neither here nor there; the contention can be neither proven nor disproven. The double-focus on the material to be shaped is in any case an abundantly documented constant in the life of many artists; and in the case of the artist Eliot the double-focus is, we may agree, the source and cause of painful, though not specially painful, tensions. Speaking as one who has invested perhaps immoderately in the stony, the marmoreal and lapidary character of the art-object, I concede that Pinkney has persuaded me, as earlier harpers on the same string haven't, that there may well be, behind such an emphatic prediction, anxieties that may be called "depressive", at all events neurotic. As for the counter-stress in Eliot, if we call it "incantatory", that must be understood only as a convenient short-hand; what it signifies is a preference for the rounded and melting contour, as against the chiseller's sharp edge. And undoubtedly, from *The Waste Land* onwards, Eliot steadily took the first option. So Ackroyd can say, very justly,

it was Eliot who in the end loosened the hold of the "modernists" on English culture - not only did he assert the public role and "social usefulness" of the writer in an almost nineteenth-century manner, but he also announced that the principles he derived from his religious belief were more enduring than literary or critical ones. He helped to create the ideal of a modern movement with his own "difficult" poetry, and then assisted at its burial.

Ackroyd, it will be observed, is a very temperate writer: it would be possible to put the matter of that last sentence more resentfully, by saying that Eliot, having seemed to liberate us from a Tennysonian understanding of poetry, ended up by plunging us into the Tennysonian universe more deeply than ever. At any event, such a drift towards the incantatory was not exceptional in Eliot's generation, since it has been (so one might argue) the undertow consensus of every generation for 200 years; it was Eliot's eminence, particularly as publisher, that made his acceding to the drift so influential.

What no one denies is the extreme and indeed plainly excessive conventionalism of Eliot in each of the successive roles of his public existence. As Harvard undergraduate, Oxford graduate, bank official, London publisher - Eliot played each role to the limit according to pre-ordained notions of what was proper.

Ever since Hugh Kenner's *The Invisible Poet* we have been invited to reflect: Aha! it is precisely the excessiveness of the impersonation that gives it away as a historical mask, defensive camouflage. No one since Conrad Aiken has entertained the possibility that the appearance corresponded to the reality; that Eliot was in fact a profoundly conventional and conformist person. To put the case at its most plausible and pitiful - is it not true that of the most conventional and conformist people we know, only the most stupid can be thought to be unaware of the histrionically defensive mask that they wear? Some of them, to come right down to it, may be hiding behind that mask a marriage not much less tormentedly unsatisfying than Eliot's to Vivien Haigh-Wood. To use that sort of mask to conceal that sort of failure is after all (and it is only compassionate to say so) quite commonplace also. It's along these lines that we seem to understand Eliot's determined dalliance with Bloomsbury. Pound and Wyndham Lewis, his early friends and champions, disapproved of this; and Vivien was distressed by it. Yet Eliot persisted. To an insecure and therefore anxiously conformist person, it may have seemed enough that Bloomsbury was publicly esteemed as a privileged inner circle; conformity would require that Eliot make his bow there, not once but often. Harder to explain is the impression that Ackroyd cannot help but give, that in some personal relations Eliot seems to have been ruthless. Regarding his behaviour at crucial times towards his first wife, towards John Hayward and Emily Hale and Mary Trevelyan, we can only wonder if we ourselves, and commonplace characters generally, are not more hard-hearted than we like to suppose.

The difficult though hackneyed question is: supposing we detect, or think we detect, deficiencies in the poet as a moral agent in life, what bearing does this have on our judgment of his poetry? From the position that such

information or speculation has no bearing on the poetry, we have advanced - if that is the word - to the position that Ackroyd seems not altogether certainly to adopt: so far from the man's failures in life reflecting adversely on his artistic work, it is precisely those failures that make possible and even underwrite his triumphs in art - for the art is the compensation for (the acknowledgment and yet overcoming of) the failures in living. This is undoubtedly compassionate in a way that the author of *After Strange Gods* rather notably wasn't. But in effect, as the moralistic author of *After Strange Gods* certainly recognized, it allows to the artist a special dispensation to behave badly. Eliot, to give him some credit at last, wouldn't buy that: sin is sin, and hell is hell, for the artist as for any other human creature. Eliot's Christianity - unappetizing as it is for many Christians, and lop-sided though it must seem to most - has at any rate this great virtue: it is not designed to get him off the hook. And indeed his embracing of Christian faith, on these particularly disadvantageous terms, is the one event in Eliot's life that lifts him far above the commonplace, just as it is the extra dimension to his experience that lifts him above Pound, in all other respects so much more decent and generous, and above Yeats. It is sadly true that after his conversion Eliot seems even more deficient in Christian charity than he was before; but at least he is no more charitable to himself than he is to others. And his Christianity was serious in other ways. When in later life he disparaged his poetry - even as he continued to practise it, and was quite avid for the rewards it brought him - he meant what he said: as between salvation and damnation, his poetry counted for nothing, unless indeed it counted towards damnation. This is a dimension of Eliot's experience that none of his commentators do justice too; and indeed there is no currently acceptable mode of critical biographical discourse that can accommodate it.

From time to time in Bush's book we recognize the author of his earlier, irreplaceably thorough study, *The Genesis of Ezra Pound's Cantos*. But writing about Eliot, Bush has let his once admirable thoroughness deteriorate into a sedate assumption that he has all the time in the world. What reader, one asks oneself, does Bush envisage, with the leisure to

Finding it hard

Lachlan Mackinnon

ROBERT S. DUPREE
Allen Tate and the Augustinian Imagination:
A study of the poetry
247pp. Louisiana State University Press.
£21.25.
0 8071 1100 7

Randall Jarrell wrote in 1962 that Allen Tate was "somewhat neglected", and suggested that his poems were perhaps "read less than they are admired because of their lack of charm, of human appeal and human sympathy, and because of their tone of somewhat forbidding authority". Even admiration is less common now than it was, with the passing of those who learned directly from Tate, and it might have been hoped that Robert S. Dupree's book would kindle new interest.

It is unlikely to do so properly, though, because Dupree pays too little attention to the negative virtues Jarrell outlined and, belying his subtitle, attends almost solely to Tate's ideas. He chooses to read from the perspective of the late *terza rima* poems and to see Tate's career as a progress towards an Augustinian position, a vision of two cities. He convincingly interprets the early work as guilt-ridden and punitive; a search for forgiveness outside time and an escape from the history Tate acquired in part from Spengler. It evinces, Dupree shows, a will to restore the mother-figure who dominates the whole career. Tate's own mother becomes Augustine's Monica in an extraordinary and consistent elevation which was, though, inimical to the poet's gifts - a tension Dupree ignores to his cost.

When he writes of the poetry's "frightening obliquity, its concrete density yoked with 'fierce Latinity', and its demonic energy"



proceed at this ambling and yet arduous pace? And the answer can only be, I fear: a fellow-professional (for Bush is Associate Professor at Cal Tech). Eliot's anxiously conventional urbanities, for instance as London clubman, had at least the virtue of discouraging such heavy-breathing professionalism among his commentators. This strenuous expansiveness in Bush is a great pity; for he asks the probing questions about *Four Quartets* which Ackroyd, in an unusual lapse, idly skims over (Pinkney, for his part, passes by the *Quartets* with a casual reference to their "equanimity" - which certainly reveals the limitations of his critical approach). Ackroyd astutely notices how American readers have tended to resist the *Quartets*, whereas the British have taken these poems to their collective heart perhaps too readily. This difference is likely to persist; for even if we agree with Bush that there is something seriously wrong with at least *The Dry Salvages*, no British reader is likely to think, as Bush wants him to, that Eliot's misjudgment about it was of a sort once diagnosed by Emerson and denounced again in Eliot's lifetime by William Carlos Williams. Eliot's sensibility may indeed have been Romantic or post-

Romantic; but this is not to say that to get the correct perspective on his achievement we need delve no further back than the nineteenth century.

Ackroyd's touch deserts him lamentably, I think, when he proceeds to his peroration:

Both as a writer and as a man, his genius lay in his ability to resist the subversive tendencies of his personality by fashioning them into something larger than himself. His work represents the brilliant efflorescence of a dying culture: he pushed that culture together by an act of will, giving it a shape and context which sprang out of his own obsessions, and the certainties which he established were rhetorical certainties. In so doing he became a symbol of the age, and his poetry became its echoing music - with its brooding grandeur as well as its blackness, its plangency as well as its ellipses, its rhythmic strength as well as its rhetorical equivocations.

This is distinguished writing; yet surely this dying fall should be resisted. For what is this culture that is declared to be "dying"? English? Anglo-American? European? And what does it mean in any case to say of a culture that it is dead or dying? Surely we may think that a culture dies only through a failure of nerve on the part of those who should sustain it, and purvey its values; by a willingness on their part to assist in its premature obsequies. It would be more modest and more plausible to say that Eliot's poetry witnesses, not to the death of a culture, but only to the end of an era. What happens surely, at the time of such an end, is that the ruling élite and the governing class (there is normally much overlap between them) prove themselves incapable of exercising the rule that history has delegated to them. In Eliot's lifetime the high bourgeoisie of England - so it might be argued - proved itself a class or a caste from which in this way virtue had departed. Eliot, who as an American did not have to ally himself with this caste, in fact chose to do so. (This is the meaning of his Bloomsbury connections.) The era of their dominance is decisively over, though the veneration accorded not unjustly to Eliot's handling of language has the effect of concealing the sterility and frivolity of those for whom he chose to act as spokesman. What will survive the dissolution of this hegemony, and its suppression by some other, is that part or aspect of Eliot's writing which makes it part of the by no means dying culture of Christendom.

Dupree is unusually and welcome responsive. But when he deals with the woman with "colled black hair" in "The Buried Lake", he asks "Is she a phantom of the poet's dead mother...? Is she some lost early love? Or... is she tradition, the South, the historical imagination? Somehow she seems to draw all these motifs together in a single figure. She is a luminous vision that turns out to be something else." This won't really do as criticism, although it reveals why the poetry won't do either. Tate's characteristic faults, the bombastic profundity and obscurity, reached their peak in the late poetry for reasons Dupree does not see. At the start of "The Maimed Man", Tate prays "Didactic Laurel, loose your reasoning leaf / Into my trembling hand". Dupree comments: "one notices that... Tate does not pluck the leaves with violence, as the young Milton must", and finds "reticence in approaching so exalted a theme", where we might see merely a sad absurdity. Tate seems to remember from Keats that poetry should come like leaves to a tree, but in crossing the idea with *Lyndas* he botches it into a clumsily put wish to write easily which cuts against all his talent and training.

The point of the early poetry was not the ideas it drew on but the difficulty with which it conveyed them. As soon as Tate, doffs his armour and walks naked, he falls flat. The best poems had depended on a persona; the *gravitas* which is so stirring in "The Mediterranean" or "To the Lacedaemonians" depends on a rhetorical mask. "Because I am here the dead wear gray" claims the speaker of the latter; the pomp is self-willed, but the "gray" unites ashes and the Confederacy with a surprise at once personal and regional. The dandified manner allows the indirect release of furious passions, and is an important part of the meaning. The

best poetry tells us what it is like to be a poet like Tate in Tate's situation, an effect which explains both his influence and his now limited appeal.

Dupree often helps us with the detail of the early work, but the tragedy is all retrospectively evaporated. The book also leaves individual poems and contributions to periodicals almost entirely undated, an infuriating deficiency which makes temporal porridge of the historical flow so important to the poet and his readers. Tate's is a distinguished if derivative voice of great historical significance and surprising moments of power; he deserves a less adulatory account than this. His charmlessness must be reckoned with rather than sidestepped if we are to see him clearly.

The most recent volume in Macmillan's "Casebook" series, *Thriller Poets: The Auden Group*, edited by Ronald Carter (211pp. £14, paperback £5.95. 0 333 29328 2), reprints extracts from the critical writings of Auden, Day Lewis, MacNeice and Spender as well as Michael Roberts, Christopher Isherwood and Francis Scarfe. These are grouped under the headings "The Poets", "The Poets on Each Other" and "Some Contemporary Critics". The essays which represent "Modern Views" include Richard Hoggart ("On Auden", 1951), Preacher and the Uncertainty of Tone", 1951), Barbara Hardy ("The Reticence of W. H. Auden", 1964), Graham Hough ("MacNeice and Auden", 1967), D. E. S. Maxwell, ("On Day Lewis - Between Two Worlds", 1969) and Geoffrey Thurlay ("On Spender - A Kind of Scapegoat", 1974). An essay by Samuel Hynes, "On Spender, Auden and Day Lewis" (1976), is included under the heading "Poets and Wars" and Francis Hope, Martha Doyle and Bernard Bergson write on "Poetry and the Thirties".

The wantonness of language

Brian Vickers

KEIR ELAM
Shakespeare's Universe of Discourse:
Language-games in the comedies
339pp. Cambridge University Press. £25
(paperback, £8.95).
0 521 22592 2

Keir Elam claims that drama "defines itself as it goes along", which accounts for "the peculiar reflexivity of dramatic discourse", in which linguistic units become "intro-referential", referring to themselves and not to an outside world. Aristotle is credited with the idea that drama sets up its fictional domain "not by narration from 'without' (*diegesis*) but by the direct representation of events 'within' the dramatic world (*mimesis*)", but this is a misleading de-limitation. Aristotle in fact says that "the objects that the initiators represent are persons engaged in action", persons "of either a higher or a lower moral type", who are involved in "doing", interacting, as we might say, in the pursuit of conflicting goals, revealing differences of character and values. The *Poetics* is not a good text to use if you wish to deny drama any mimetic or representational function. True, the dramatic experience is mediated through language among other media, but it raises issues that are more than verbal - crises of relationship, love, ethics, politics, social and personal abuse and breakdown. True again that Shakespeare is highly conscious of the language he gives his characters, and shares his linguistic awareness with some of them, but we take the part for the whole if we "foreground" language at the expense of everything else.

The "universe of discourse" in drama is not autonomous, and it is disingenuous to act as if it were. Elam still refers to characters by names, summarizes plot, links up phases of the action, eventually accepts that the plays represent people acting and doing. Yet he can interpret the episode in *As You Like It*, where Le Beau attempts to tell Rosalind and Celia about the wrestling-match, only to be frustrated by their punning and mistaking, as "an exemplary essay in the referential poetics of Shakespearean comedy", in which "direct narrativity... is refused in favour of a dialogic telling which privileges the current communicative context, and still more the brilliantly self-propagating co-text, over the proposed objects of discourse". There are other ways in which one might discuss that scene, but Elam is intent on reducing all elements in drama to the verbal plane. Rejecting Aristotle's hierarchy, in which *lexis* is the medium through which imitation is performed, but is less important than the plot or "organization of the events", Elam claims that modern speech-act theory breaks down this distinction: language is action, the main *praxis* of Shakespearean comedy therefore lies in "direct acts of language". One theorist he cites defines drama as "a story composed of a series of speech acts", so that we no longer have characters talking to each other but "interpersonal forces responsible for carrying forward the narrative dynamic". Such a literary theory would be useless for drama, if it meant that any verbal exchange could be excerpted and subjected to linguistic analysis without considering who says it to whom, and why, and what has happened before, or will happen after, and perhaps as a consequence of this exchange.

These dubious critical assumptions apart, the book draws on both modern linguistics and Renaissance rhetoric, a laudable new marriage of *Mercury* and *Philo*logy. In practice linguistics looms larger, from Austin and Searle to C. S. Lewis, H. P. Grice, Erving Goffman, and some sociologists of "natural talk". Elam has read widely, and his work will stimulate discussions, but he should have given more thought to the applicability of his models - can one take John Lyons's account of temporal structures in "language" say, as applicable directly to drama? More seriously, the bringing-in of a very wide range of linguistic models leads to a fragmentation, both of the plays and of his own discourse, which is divided into many brief sections, often juxtaposing a new linguistic theory with one or two Shakespearean quotations, so that one is constantly trying to

reconstruct the dramatic context. In effect the dramatic texts are used to illustrate a linguistic argument, and the book's real concern is to set up a taxonomy, which makes it hard to read as continuous criticism.

On the historical side too (the use of Renaissance rhetoric), wide reading is put to very specific application, in a series of micro-contexts. The strength of this book lies in its painstaking analysis of small passages, which do not add up to an overall argument. There are many revealing citations from Renaissance texts to gloss specific uses (or usually misuses) of language, but Elam has evidently ignored all the rhetoricians and literary theorists who stressed that language is meant to communicate human experience, or that drama is an image of the times, as Jonson put it, "expressing the life of man". He has also missed fundamental points in the rhetoricians, claiming that Aristotle gives only perfunctory attention to the "moral integrity of the orator", and that his Renaissance heir was Machiavelli. But Aristotle's whole philosophical and political system is based on the practice of virtue, a duty from which the orator is not exempted; indeed Aristotle linked rhetoric indissolubly with ethics in his account of epideictic, where the orator has to praise virtue and attack vice.

Where this book's historical attempt goes off the rails altogether is in trying to apply to Shakespeare's comedies a mass of occult linguistics. Plato's *Cratylus*, Ficino, Pico della Mirandola, Cornelius Agrippa, the Cabala and much else are dragged in to explicate *Love's Labour's Lost*. It is true that the academy that the King of France attempts to set up at the beginning of the play resembles the Platonic academies in France, well studied by Frances Yates, which debated such topics as the active and contemplative lives, music, rhetoric and other Renaissance concerns. But to claim that "neo-Platonic and Hermetic philosophy, whose influence was felt everywhere", has left its traces on the comedies, so that Bottom's affectionate naming of Titania's fairies proves him to be "a Renaissance hermetist [in] unmediated communion with the natural essences underlying the lexicon", that the fairies' description of flowers is the "pristine *lingua adamica*", and Berowne an adept in Ficino's poetic theology, with an "ostentatiously advertised Orphic programme" - this is to lose all contact with history or probability. Instead of argument we get reckless assertions, as in the later work of Yates or the more extravagant theories of Edgar Wind.

The crucial link in Elam's occult interpretation of *Love's Labour's Lost* is the closing line of the play, "The words of Mercury are harsh after the songs of Apollo". The 1598 Quarto printed these words in larger Roman type with no speech prefix, while the Folio assigned them to Armado, adding the sentence "You that way; we this way." What does Mercury mean here? E. K. Chambers dismissed him as irrelevant, Anne Barton and J. M. Norworthy identify him with Marcade, the messenger who brought the news of the death of the King of France. But this event occurs over a hundred lines before Armado's reference, and much takes place in between - Berowne's "honest plain words", the Princess's sentence of the lords to a year's separation, with Berowne to jest in a hospital, and the concluding "dialogue... in praise of the owl and the cuckoo". Since this song by winter and spring is presented by Armado, a prose character, who frames it in prose, I suggest that Apollo refers to poetry, Mercury to prose, or to the opposition sung/spoken language. But to Elam it reveals the "optimistic Orphism" in the play, and he bases his argument on the parallel between the King's claim in the opening scene that as a result of his little academy "Nay, we shall be the wonder of the world" and a sentence in the *Gesta Grayorum* or Gray's Inn Revels for 1594 (a possible source for the "Muscovites" in Shakespeare's play). Here a counsellor advises the Prince of Purpoole to set up a spacious garden and devote himself to the study of philosophy: "then indeed you shall lay [sic] a *Trilephus* and... be left the only Miracles and Wonder of the World".

The coincidence of such a common phrase is already a flimsy base on which to build an argument, but Elam finds the reference to Hermes Trismegistus of crucial importance, "so that one is constantly trying to

with "extensive and highly suggestive" parallels between the *Gesta* and the play. The excitement of being able to ascribe a "quasi-mystagogic vein" to *Love's Labour's Lost*, with "Bacchic Erotic and Orphic mysteries" being conveyed in the Platonists' "Egyptian" (sc. hieroglyphic) mode, seems to have blinded him to some basic facts about the *Gesta* (not published until 1688). He ascribes it to one Henry Helmes, but a more careful reading of the text will show that he was only the Prince of Purpoole, the leader of the revels elected by his fellow-students. The author of the six speeches was in fact Francis Bacon, as James Spedding showed in 1861 in the first volume of his *Letters and Life*, where he also made the necessary emendation, "be a Trismegistus". Bacon, then aged thirty-three, had been a student, benchman and reader at Gray's Inn; the following year he prepared a similar device for the Queen's birthday, the interest of both works for most readers being that they announced for the first time some of his basic ideas for the reform of science. They are neither Orphic nor cabalistic, and the name Hermes in Bacon's mouth has the same general and vague connotations of "wise man" as it has for most Renaissance users.

Elam's book makes several genuine contributions to our understanding of Shakespeare's intense working with and against language. He gives extensive commentaries on the inset plays in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Love's Labour's Lost*, especially the ways in which their presentation fails or is denied, and through the elaborate taxonomies one can glimpse the outline of another book waiting to be written, but on a larger plan. Much of the humour, and seriousness, of the comedies derives from communication being refused, denied, frustrated. If language is an exchange, over and over in these plays one of the parties to the exchange stops it taking

place, either out of ignorance, or malice or high spirits. These deviations from the successful speech-act imply the existence, for Shakespeare and his audience, of a norm of healthy, functional communication where language is put to use to the ends for which it was intended. In these plays language is misused, subject to every form of corruption, phonetic, syntactic, semantic, rhetorical. In *LLL*, "this comedy of excesses, the hyperbole, trope of extremes, becomes virtually the expressive norm". The play keeps up a running commentary, ruthlessly exposing every misuse of language, yet this is part of a larger concern, not with words alone but with life. Berowne is ultimately made the scapegoat, which at least expresses the desire for a cure, even though unfairly since everyone is guilty. But it reminds us that one major preoccupation in Shakespeare's comedies is the establishing of a good society, in which forces of discord and evil are either cured, humiliated or expelled.

The critique of language carried on here is not the sign of a self-consciousness about language or the reflexivity of drama - which in Renaissance terms would mean a deplorable cultivation of *verba* at the expense of *res* - but part of a wider concern with the health of society. As Ben Jonson wrote in his notebook, *Discoveries*, "Speech is the only benefit man hath to express his excellency of mind above other creatures. It is the instrument of Society. Therefore Mercury, who is the President of Language, is called *Deorum hominumque interpres*". As the instrument of social being, it follows that "whosoever manners, and fashions are corrupted; Language is, it imitates the publicke riot. The excesses of Feasts, and apparell, are the notes of a sick State; and the wantonness of language, of a sick mind." Come to think of it, that might be an explanation for the crisis of contemporary critical theory.

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Police and public

Laurie Taylor

JOHN ALDERSON
Law and Disorder
247pp. Hamish Hamilton. £9.95.
0241 112591
JOHN LEA and JOCK YOUNG
What is to be done about Law and Order?
288pp. Penguin. Paperback. £2.95.
0 14 006 5938

On January 25, 1980, in the House of Commons, Alex Lyon, the MP for York, made what one newspaper described as "an astonishing attack" on the Chief Constable for Devon and Cornwall. John Alderson's much publicized "community policing" was, he declared, a way of compounding rather than resolving the problem of police accountability. "Mr Alderson... believes he can create communities where police do the work of the social security department and housing department without the overall control of local authorities."

As it happened this particular disagreement was quickly settled. In a move characteristic of the man, Alderson invited Lyon to visit the force, after which, "Mr Lyon retracted his allegations and subsequently became a fervent supporter of the community policing idea."

But others remain suspicious about such police initiatives to restore contact with the neighbourhood. Only two months ago, in an article in *Critical Social Policy*, Paul Gordon was still complaining that, "Community policing... is an attempt at the surveillance and control of communities by the police, an attempt which operates under the guise of police offering advice and assistance."

Arguments about how greater police accountability might be achieved, and indeed about the whole philosophy of policing in a democratic society dominate both these books. Fortunately Alderson's right to pronounce on such matters does not depend solely upon the validity of his particular version of "community policing". As Mr Lyon probably realized on his visit, and as others have discovered from his previous book, *Folding Freedom* (1979), and his public pronouncements as a Liberal parliamentary candidate, Alderson is thoroughly committed to reducing the present level of police autonomy. Even when in office he recognized that he had other duties as a chief constable than to support his own side. "I personally regard it as of equal importance... the chief constable's right - and duty - to speak out against the professional subculture and the police establishment itself when the occasion demands it."

This he undoubtedly did. In his speech to the Conservative Home Affairs Committee in 1978 he warned William Whitelaw and others of the prospects of inner city riots unless there was some retreat from the strict "law enforcement" view of police work. Then, after those riots occurred in 1981, he was busy telling the Sturman Inquiry that, "The manifestation of racial prejudice in the performance of police duty should be included as an offence under the Police Discipline Code". In autumn of the same year he was at it again, standing up before a hostile audience at the Association of Chief Police Officers' conference and attacking the post-riot decision to add such equipment as plastic bullets to the police armoury. He warned that "we were tooling up to declare war on the public", and that a "hundred and fifty years of police heritage would go down the drain for the sake of a few hours of madness on the streets".

Other acts of political courage while he was "on the job" are modestly documented in *Law and Disorder* together with a most instructive and even moving account of the "Luxury Case" in which Alderson was unsuccessfully taken to court by the Central Electricity Generating Board following his insistence upon using the principles of community policing to handle a local protest over the possible siting of a nuclear power station. After the affair was concluded without any manhandling or arrest of protestors the Justice of the Peace commented: "At a time when the police image is not everywhere free of criticism, we hope his courageous stand for a close identification of interest between the police and the public will not be undermined."

It is this identification of interest between

police and public which is really the subject matter of *Law and Disorder*. Alderson rejects the idea of the police as law enforcers in favour of a view of them as "peace officers" and "preservers of liberty". There is, he claims, no solution to the crime problem in more policemen, tougher sentences or higher technology. Instead the public and the police have to renew the contract between them in which the public's cooperation over crime, their readiness to report incidents and take preventive measures, is complemented by police concern about individual rights and accountability to the local community.

This is not mere rhetoric. In an excellent chapter entitled "Justice and the Police", Alderson gives hard examples of just how police "unfairness" has produced the breakdown in trust which now must be remedied. He roundly condemns, for instance, the abuse of the "sus" law, and accurately notes the clear injustice in the motoring lobby being able to resist random breath-tests for alcohol, while, "West Indians who are innocent of any crime have no such lobby, save perhaps violence at the end of the day, and by resisting a search render themselves liable to further criminalisation for obstructing the police in the exercise of their discretion."

After such strong egalitarian words from an ex-chief constable, it is fascinating to come across a book "sponsored" by the Socialist Society which addresses itself to very similar issues. Like Alderson, Jock Young and John Lea see the role of the police as of central importance in any debate about law and order, and are also highly critical of the drift towards what they call "military policing", that is, policing without the consent of the community. They also emphasize how this drift reduces the cooperation between police and public which is essential for the control of crime, and again, like Alderson, concentrate particularly upon those "marginalized" groups who have to bear the brunt of the present heavy-handed policy.

What makes their book such an interesting

The real them

Roland Littlewood

ANTHONY CLARE
In the Psychiatrist's Chair
210pp. Chatto and Windus/Hogarth Press.
£9.95 (paperback, £4.95).
0 7011 27937

Some years ago a joke was floating around psychiatric circles which went as follows: "My patient said he thought that as a psychiatrist I could read his mind. I explained that he was thinking of a psychoanalyst." Although he is the descendant of the lunatic asylum keeper rather than of the depth psychologist, the psychiatrist's popular image remains that of a little bearded figure with a Central European accent, scribbling away in a notebook behind his recumbent patient. British psychiatrists are of course primarily doctors, concerned with a rather physical view of mental illness and neither interested in, nor conversant with, psychoanalytical thinking. Anthony Clare is himself well-known as a dissector of psychoanalytical pretensions of "understanding life. *Let's Talk About Me* was his recent onslaught on fashionable Californian psychotherapies. Here he offers by contrast the edited transcripts of interviews with nine notable Britons, originally broadcast on Radio 4 in 1982.

"In the psychiatrist's chair" then, not on the couch. Professor Clare distances himself from the psychodynamic approaches to creativity and public achievement familiar in the United States as psychohistory and psychobiography which is ultimately derived from Freud's studies of Leonardo and Woodrow Wilson. Discarding psychodynamics leaves space for other explanations of personality, motivation and achievement; how does Clare explain such diverse figures as Judge Christmas Humphreys, Spike Milligan and Neil Dunn? Can Clare's psychiatrist show us anything more about his subjects than the intrusive interviewer of Wimbledon champions? In the interview with David Irving and his discussion of "the Jewish problem" and Irving's identification with Hitler,

complement to Alderson's however, is that while the ex-chief constable is trying to put some distance between himself and former police colleagues, Young and Lea are fending off attacks from their former comrades on the left. Unlike those they now describe as "left idealists" (they modestly refer to themselves as "left realists") they insist that street crime is thoroughly anti-social behaviour. Muggings and property thefts cannot be justified as natural expressions of political anger, as responses to repression. Correspondingly, there should be no attempt to play down the impact of crime by concentrating upon those reassuring statistics which demonstrate the low average chance of anyone being a victim, or which show that the highest victimization rates are intra-group (say, young males against young males). "Around the margins there exists a group of people who are relatively low offenders but relatively high victims. These are also the most vulnerable people in the population." Crime, therefore, really is a problem.

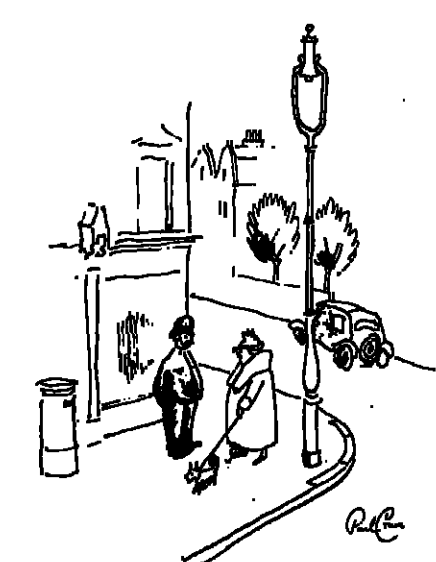
As might be expected Young and Lea go further than Alderson in their account of the "consultative" procedures which should lie at the heart of any new "preventive" or "community policing". But there is convergence again over the necessity of defining those community and local interests which might have significant influence upon the police. "Local government... is no longer, in the true sense, 'local'", complains Alderson, as a preliminary to developing his idea of a network of "community forums". While Lea and Young ask, "Can the local community be reconstituted as a political entity despite the decline in cultural homogeneity and the fragmentation characterising the present period", before going on to argue for the creation of "institutions for local democracy".

Both books are valuable contributions to the present debate on law and order; even more so because they arrive at so many similar conclusions from such different starting-points. Whereas Alderson provides a personal and

ler, we learn little that could not be surmised from Irving's book *Hitler's War*. In this case Clare backs away from interpretations of Irving's wait for his moment of destiny. The theme of the personal psychological roots of political reaction has of course been one of considerable interest to psychoanalysts (Erik Erikson, Erich Fromm, Wilhelm Reich).

The fact that Clare is a psychiatrist, together with the title of the radio series, seems to have had two consequences. He does not escape from the popular image of the psychoanalyst as licensed intruder into personal motives and actions. Indeed his questions on bereavement and infidelity seem only tolerable within some specially sanctioned space. The participants themselves seem to have hoped for some insights into themselves in exchange for public self-disclosures unusual on this side of the Atlantic. The privileged role of the psychiatrist allows cross-questioning and a disregard of customary zones of privacy. How much do participants actually "disclose"? Perhaps the most interesting aspect of the book is its illustration of how professional and lay person come together in implicit agreement on which explanatory models to employ. These are based on popular psychological notions which, perhaps not surprisingly, reveal affinities with psychoanalysis. For instance individuals are conceived of in terms of distinct private and public selves. As we are dealing with "public" figures the distinction is reinforced: the public sphere equates with the public persona. "Private life" is understood to include past events prior to public recognition, relations with others outside the public arena and (in a striking tribute to psychodynamics) an area of subjectivity, unconscious or instinctual, of which the individual is not aware.

The private sphere is seen as primary. As Clare calls it at the beginning of most interviews - "the real you". Private life generates the public life by extension. Public recognition is produced by the continued pursuit of private motives in ways that are socially rewarded. That present public life is considerably determined by past "private" events is accepted by



Reproduced from *The Last Cream Bun*: Drawings by Roger Pettitward ('Paul Crum') (96pp. Chatto and Windus. £8.95. 0 7011 29077). Apart from his work as a serious painter Pettitward contributed cartoons to Punch and the short-lived Night and Day; he was killed leading his commando troop at Dieppe in 1942.

occasionally idiosyncratic tour of the area, Lea and Young are particularly strong on the historical processes which have marginalized sections of our society, and while their book may, among some socialists, be seen as another example of "polite social democratic rhetoric" (a charge already made against them) it is surely thoroughly radical - "left realist" if they insist in the careful recognition of the real harm of crime, the "sub-culture of despair" which promotes such behaviour, the partial truth about black crime which might give right-wing myths their potency, and above all in its thoroughgoing commitment to social justice as a precondition for any real improvement in the present situation.

all the subjects as self-evident while they may quarrel with particular instances suggested by Clare. (Rarely a more dynamic collocation, compensation, appears: public life may be the opposite of private.) Given the ready articulation of the private/public dichotomy it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the personal life envisaged by public figures is in fact derived from their public image. This is the reverse of the implicit psychology. Thus Richard Marsh, as a businessman, offers a view of himself as a package to be sold like any other product, and Christmas Humphreys's view of personal misfortune and tribulation is couched in an impassive idiom which owes as much to his judicial role as to his Buddhism.

As Clare points out in his introduction, the interviews cannot of course be regarded as psychiatric consultations. Nevertheless there are therapeutic intentions. The patient is not the person who has been interviewed but the listener or reader. Clare explains that one of the reasons for the radio series was to show that public figures have private frailties and anxieties, with the intention that the audience could be encouraged to overcome their own difficulties. Thus we are back with certain psychodynamic assumptions, and an implicit hypothesis similar to that underlying Anthony Storr's *The Dynamics of Creation*: creativity is not pathological in itself, but is the successful resolution of internal conflicts. One snag, however, is that the general "public" do not of course have selves of quite the type of those of the people interviewed. The book succeeds admirably in its intentions. Many of the interviews are poignant, none is without interest and some indeed are chilling.

Down and Out, Orwell's London and Paris revisited by Sandy Craig and Chris Schwartz (95pp. plus 80pp of black-and-white photographs. Penguin. Paperback. £4.95. 0 14 006912 7) compares the conditions of the 1930s with those described by George Orwell fifty years ago in *Down and Out in Paris and London*, interweaving passages from his book with their own observations.

Into the morass

Abraham Brumberg

JAN B. DE WEYDENTHAL, BRUCE D. PORTER and KEVIN DEVLIN
The Polish Drama: 1980-1982
351pp. Lexington: Lexington Books. \$27.95.
0669 062146

The Polish Drama: 1980-1982 is the work of three senior analysts at Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty in Munich. Each writes on his area of specialization - Jan B. de Weydenthal on internal Polish development, Bruce D. Porter on Soviet and East European policies, and Kevin Devlin on the reactions of Western Communist parties. To read their book is to be struck once again by the awesome contrast between the Polish "renewal" and its aftermath. If the earlier period, which began with the signing of the Gdansk Agreement of August 31, 1980, may be described - after Dr Johnson - as the triumph of hope over experience, the one ushered in by Jaruzelski's "state of war" can surely be seen as the revenge of experience over hope. The hope of millions of Poles for an opportunity at last to write their own history was relentlessly challenged by the local power apparatus - with Moscow's "fraternal assistance" - whose panoply of weapons had been successfully tested by the experience of thirty-five years of Communist rule. To be sure, the apparatus was unable simply to dust off the old weapons and, after a brief interlude of spurious soul-searching, resume business as usual. Past revolts could be crushed by brute force, invariably followed by the dismissal of the discredited leadership and solemn promises to turn over a new leaf. But the "renewal" was a truly national revolution, and one, moreover, that lasted for sixteen unforgettable months. A new strategy had to be devised - more laconic on the one hand, more subtle on the other.

And so it was: a stunning blow to the head, and along convalescence designed to make the victim if not love, then at least accept, Big Brother. Was it worked out directly after the birth of Solidarity, by cunning adversaries awaiting the propitious moment to put it into effect? This view enjoys wide currency not only in the West, but also among many Poles who see Solidarity's end latent in its very inception. Yet what emerges from both de Weydenthal's and Porter's accounts of the events of late 1980-early 1981 is a sense of rampant disarray - no less in the ruling élite than in the workers' movement. Solidarity was confused about its very character. It was rent by organizational chaos and by internal disagreements. And it was unsure about day-to-day tactics as well as long-term goals. The same was true for the ruling élite. The frequent changes of ministers, deputy ministers and party secretaries, open feuds between "hardliners" (themselves split into factions) and "moderates", the mass defection from the party and the fact that one million party members joined Solidarity (and, in the rapidly mushrooming conflicts, frequently sided with the latter) clearly suggest

that Poland's rulers were utterly at a loss about how to deal with so massive and unprecedented a challenge.

This is not to say that the party simply rolled over and played dead. Underlying the numerous personnel changes, the feverish meetings and dire warnings that the party was not about to relinquish its "leading role" and also the sundry local and national conflicts between Solidarity and party and government officials, was a fierce determination to halt the internal rot, to resist the Union's demands, to delay and if possible to thwart the implementation of the Gdansk accords. It is clear that at no time did the ruling élite, following what de Weydenthal correctly calls a hastily improvised policy of "appeasement", seriously consider honouring its promises to Solidarity. Neither, however, did it have any clear idea - at least at the beginning - of how to disarm its opponent and reassert its power and authority. The result, of course, was escalating confrontations and a crippling political stalemate.

The Soviet leaders were no more agile than the Polish authorities. What they wanted was obvious: a strong party and a gradually emasculated Solidarity. But how to achieve it? Direct military intervention, as Porter shows, was something Moscow was eager to avoid. The alternative was to intimidate the population and pressure the leadership into adopting firmer measures against the Union. The Warsaw Pact manoeuvres held intermittently in 1980-81 were meant to accomplish the former; various threatening letters to the Polish comrades plus the odd article in the Soviet press praising the hard-line party "forums" that sprang up at that time the latter. As it turned out, the *Groß Propaganda* impressed the US State Department and Pentagon more than it did the average Pole. The pressure exerted on the party, however, worked. It is useful to have Porter and de Weydenthal's cool appraisal of these tactics, the more so since much speculative nonsense has been written in the West on this subject, both before and after martial law.

Was Jaruzelski a "Soviet agent"? Was the letter sent by the Soviet Central Committee to its Polish counterpart (in June 1981) intended to topple Kania as party secretary and Jaruzelski as prime minister? Did the Soviet leaders (or the putative hard-liners among them) actually encourage blackguards like Stefan Olszowski and Stanislaw Grabski - whose distaste for the "liberalism" of Jaruzelski and Kania was an open secret - to wrest power from their rivals?

In fact as long as Kania was in power, the Soviets supported him, as they had supported his predecessor, Edward Giersek, right up to his forced retirement in September 1980. At the same time, they served notice on Kania to put his house in order, by simultaneously attacking his faint-hearted colleagues and praising Poland's "true" Marxist-Leninists. This double-pronged approach explains Kania's success at the "extraordinary" congress of July 1981, when he routed all his opponents and tightened his grip on the party apparatus. By September, his period of probation (to use Porter's apt term) was over. With mounting restlessness in

the country, with the growth "of radical and fundamentalist moods" within Solidarity's ranks, with an economy near collapse and with renewed alarms from Moscow, it only remained for Kania to resign and hand over the reins to Jaruzelski. Though the general had been criticized by Soviet leaders only a few months earlier, he obviously promised to deliver the goods - which, with chilling aplomb, he did on December 13.

We may never know exactly when the elaborate martial law scenario was designed, or when the decision to launch it was finally taken. What is clear, however, is that the policies of the Jaruzelski régime since December 1981 have been remarkably consistent, in contrast to the party's vacillations and panic during the first part of Solidarity's legal existence. It is commonplace to consider the generals adept at coercion but woefully inept at finding a political (and economic) solution to Poland's continuous crisis. But the men in uniform, most of them well-educated and indoctrinated, have proved more than a match for their civilian comrades, and all of Jaruzelski's major policies bear the hallmarks of calculated and deliberate planning. That the new tactics have failed to stabilize the economy and strengthen the legitimacy of the government, that the vast majority of Poles despise the régime, and that a resilient "underground society" continues to flourish reflect less Jaruzelski's political ineptitude than the enduring legacy of sixteen months of freedom. Without offering a political *quid pro quo* - that is, without providing society with a genuine voice in shaping its own affairs - the régime, whatever its tergiversations, has little hope of eliciting any support in rescuing the country from its current morass. The *immobilisme*, then, is bound to persist, as is the prospect of another popular upheaval.

There is yet another piece of conventional wisdom that de Weydenthal skilfully deflates: namely, that the military coup resulted, in effect, in the replacement of the state and party by a new organ, the military. This view rests on two misapprehensions: that the party is a unitary structure, and that the military comprised "an institution separate from the other institutions of the system". As de Weydenthal shows, the party has always comprised three distinct groups: the top echelons (Central Committee, Politburo and Secretariat); the middle rung of party apparatus (regional officials and functionaries); and the rank and file. As for the military, it has always been subordinated to the highest organs of the party, of which its officer corps forms an integral part. The seismic shocks of 1980-81 - mass defections and the short-lived "horizontal movement" - were produced only by the rank and file; mid-level apparatus, fearful of losing their social, political and purely material privileges, consistently sided with the leadership. Indeed, they often acted as a pressure group, prodding the leadership towards a more implacable stance.

To be sure, thousands of *apparatchiki* were purged after Jaruzelski's coup. But the central bodies of power remained intact. Of the fifteen full members of the Politburo, for instance,

only one resigned (in 1982), and two new members were co-opted. Only three of the Central Committee's 200 members were removed. If the party, in other words, called upon the military to impose order, it did so not by way of abdicating its power, but because the military knew how to do it, and enjoyed an enormous - if sadly misplaced - popularity in the country. (Face some Western authorities, the image of Jaruzelski-as-saviour was not confined only to "naïve Western observers"; it was shared by the overwhelming majority of Poles.) In this case the interests of the Polish ruling apparatus coincided with those of the Soviet élite.

The third section of *The Polish Drama*, Kevin Devlin's, deals with Western Communist reactions to East European régimes in general and recent Polish events in particular. There are probably few people who know as much as Devlin about the ideological and political vicissitudes of the world's Communist parties, and who write about them so astutely and engagingly. Some details may strike one as excessive: do we really care, for instance, whether the Communist Party of San Marino approved or disapproved of Jaruzelski's coup? But Devlin's discussion of the jagged course pursued by the French party, and the impact of Polish developments on the Italian party, makes for fascinating reading. The CPF is too corrupt, too riddled with opportunism to attempt anything like a searching appraisal of "real existing socialism". Constrained by the need to placate incompatible constituencies - its own Stalinists and its own moderates, left-wing French public opinion as well as Moscow - the French party's response to Poland had been tortuous, its criticisms of the Soviet Union and of Jaruzelski timid and toothless.

Not so the Italian party, which under the late Enrico Berlinguer's leadership had gradually been diverting itself of organizational links with and ideological loyalty to the Soviet Union. As Devlin meticulously demonstrates, the Italian CP - except for its steadily shrinking Stalinist component - unstintingly praised Solidarity and consistently condemned its suppression. In its view the 1981 coup served as proof that the Polish régime had finally lost all legitimacy save that of "the logic of power" supported by internal and international mechanisms, and attested to the bankruptcy of the "Soviet model of socialism" as well. Coming thirteen years after the Czechoslovak invasion and two years after the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan - both of which the Italian party condemned - the imposition of martial law in Poland provided the Italian CP with a propitious opportunity to reaffirm its espousal of "democracy and pluralism" as essential elements of the kind of socialism the party had been advocating.

Towards Moscow's predictably furious reactions the Italians remained calm, noting that the Soviet leaders were "absolutely incapable of conducting a discussion on the basis of equality and reciprocal respect". Not exactly a worldshaking discovery but, considering its provenance, a welcome one all the same.

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When to send a gunboat

Edward N. Luttwak

JAMES H. WYLLIE
The Influence of British Arms: An analysis of British military intervention since 1956
125pp. Allen and Unwin. £12.50.
004320161 X

James H. Wyllie's aim in *The Influence of British Arms* is to define as precisely as possible the constraints – domestic and international, political and military – which limit Britain's ability to stage armed interventions outside the sphere of the North Atlantic alliance and its American guarantees. The work is supposed to be a "case study", whose rather specific conclusions should also apply to other "West European medium-rank powers". The author thus strives to write "international relations" rather than mere history. But the syllogism is improper: Britain is indeed West European and of medium rank by the author's own defence-budget criterion, but only France among the other West European medium-rank powers is in the same class as Britain when it comes to combat in faraway places. None of the other possible candidates – presumably West Germany, Italy and Spain – has the traditions, or if one prefers, the nostalgic longings which sustain the British propensity for armed interventions – a propensity widely distributed in the political spectrum and strongly supported in the press, at least to the extent that it reflects the views of the mass public. Nor do other West European powers, except for France, have the particular military expertise required for expeditionary ventures, or the risk-taking aptitude which is essential when great distances intervene to magnify hugely all the frictions of war, making its dangers not necessarily acute (militarily the opponents are usually third-raters) but especially hard to calculate.

Fortunately Wyllie's good sense prevails: his attempt to make history pay tribute to "international relations" by way of generalizations supposedly valid for several countries is so halfhearted that it hardly diminishes the value of the work, which derives precisely from the quality of its historical analysis. To define the boundaries of feasible intervention and spell out the conditions required for success, he first reviews the Suez operation of 1956, in a concise yet illuminating manner (although the prose is surprisingly bad, the damage is merely aesthetic, because the meaning remains very clear). Eden's Suez adventure makes a very satisfactory counter-example because it powerfully illustrates the proposition that the mere possession of abundant military means for

intervention does not assure its feasibility. Though such ventures require a willingness to take risks, the British chiefs of staff were absurdly overcautious. They accepted Nasser's inflated military pretensions at face value, insisted on the preliminary bombing of Egyptian air bases, and forced their impatient French colleagues to join them in assembling a formidable armada for the expedition, which included 80,000 troops with 20,000 vehicles and eighty ship-loads of stores, as well as seven aircraft carriers, forty submarines and dozens of cruisers and destroyers.

A slow amphibious armada was thus fatally misemployed in a fast-moving crisis, making it quite impossible to coordinate the military moves with diplomacy in Washington and effective political action at home. By the time the British and French troops finally reached the scene on November 6, 1956, popular indignation in Britain over the nationalization of the Canal on July 26 had waned, world opinion had been thoroughly aroused by the bombing of Egypt which had begun a week earlier, and the contrived excuse for the campaign (the separation of the combatants) had become totally unbelievable because the Egyptians and Israelis had already stopped fighting. The chances of obtaining American approval and broad support at home were very slim to begin with, but it was the manner in which the operation was conducted that guaranteed its diplomatic and political failure, making the military potential of the seven aircraft carriers, forty submarines and all the rest quite irrelevant.

In the immediate aftermath, many interpreted the Suez fiasco to mean that in the new world of the superpowers Britain had simply become too weak to employ military forces on its own, or even with France. The prescription that logically followed was to give up armed intervention, or else attempt the hopeless task of building superpower-like military strength from the resources of a middling economy in decline. The seemingly safe prediction was that Britain would cope with the continued devolution of the empire by a simple series of renunciations, unrelieved by any acts of force to keep the process under control.

But successive British governments acted on a much less drastic interpretation, which did give sanction to further interventions if only on a modest scale, and always subject to the twin imperatives of broad political support at home and the approval of the American government. For Whitehall practitioners, the practical lesson of Suez was that the loading schedules and timetables of the military planners would have to be firmly subordinated to the needs of political (and press) management and certainly to

the priorities of diplomacy. As a result, the military power that could actually be employed for unilateral interventions would usually amount to a mere fraction of the total capabilities theoretically available – and it was in the gap between the two that the decline of British power was manifest, quite as much as in the relative decline of total capabilities.

Having defined the new rules of the game which the failure of the Suez venture made explicit, Wyllie next surveys the overall economic, international and military context displaying once more his talent for brevity by covering the major trends in a few pages of text which nevertheless contains all the essentials. The post-Suez style of intervention is then presented at work in a series of brief appraisals of Oman 1957, Jordan 1958 and Malaysia 1963–6. In each case contrasting estimates of the results obtained, of the costs and putative benefits are judiciously compared, although some readers may detect a bias against such action in an author devoid of any material enthusiasm, and wholly immune to what might be called the Kipling syndrome – denounced without that name from the first words of the preface: "The dispatch of military expeditionary forces to faraway, often seeming exotic places appeals to the atavistic longings of many people and conjures up romantic images . . . [regardless of costs and benefits]."

Wyllie recognizes the high professional quality of Britain's shrinking armed forces in the conduct of the post-Suez operations, but his evaluation of costs and benefits naturally reflects the inherent asymmetry between the measurable immediacy of the former, and the intangibility of the latter: that Britain did much for "stability" is certain, but what the stability of sundry ex-colonies did for Britain is much less clear.

The author concludes his account of the post-Suez campaigns as follows: "By 1967, despite the political will [for further action], economic stringency and related operational problems decreed that the Confrontation was to be the last classic British military intervention." Seemingly categorical, the flat prediction is in fact abundantly hedged by the wonderfully elastic adjective – as if Kuwait 1961 or Jordan 1958 had been any more "classic" than Beirut 1982. In the latter, of course, a mere company of British troops played fourth fiddle to an American Marine battalion, but that was no different from the Jordan operation of 1958, when a mere 1,500 British paratroopers were sent, in close coordination with a Marine landing in Lebanon backed by the entire Sixth Fleet.

Wyllie reinforces his claim by devoting the next chapter to "non-intervention", examining two cases in which British action might have been expected, the Rhodesian rebellion and the Cyprus crisis of 1974 – in which, arguably, Britain had not merely the right but also the duty to involve itself. The two cases are offered to illustrate the proposition that since 1963 "Britain has appeared to be adjusting itself to the fact that, as a medium-rank European power, it is no longer in the business of achieving foreign policy objectives outside the North Atlantic area through the projection of military power, but must rely on diplomatic, economic and military aid instruments". (That, incidentally, is a fair sample of the book's prose.) The argument is further strengthened by another exercise in concise exposition, a detailed recording of the decline of British intervention capabilities during the 1970s, especially in the wake of the Defence White Paper of 1975.

All this prepares us not at all for the Falklands intervention – which Wyllie is careful not to describe as such: "The Falklands campaign . . . was not military intervention but rather the liberation and reoccupation of sovereign territory." One wonders whether many Argentinian political scientists would agree with the distinction, which is not at all impressive: each one of the interventions reviewed in the book could also be defined otherwise, and was at the time. And the author himself implies that British military action against Mr. Smith's UDI, to recapture territory not less "sovereign", would have been a case of intervention, for he describes what did not happen as a case of non-intervention.

It is not the words that count but the reality, which is that Britain retains the propensity and expertise to use force in distant places on a not-so-modest scale, always subject to the post-Suez rules. So long as no first-rate enemies must be fought, seemingly rigid constraints on expeditionary capabilities are in fact rather elastic, especially if the essential content of American approval yields some actual logistic support. As James H. Wyllie himself points out, the state of international society appears quite likely to warrant further interventions, and not necessarily only those which he is inclined to approve in his conclusions: "invited, short, sharp . . . in pursuit of a clear and laudable objective", or else very limited and "low-key", as in Oman. The author would leave all more exacting interventions to the United States alone: but as the Grenada operation has recently shown that isn't necessarily a good idea.

saints and martyrs for peace groups all over the world. The hysterical response to the women, both by government and local establishments may really be due to underlying fears about nuclear war and the effectiveness of deterrence as a policy. Cassandra, as Blackwood points out, have never been popular. But there also appear to be deeper levels at which the rage of the anti-protestors is aroused. This spontaneous and voluntary association of females, without formal leadership or hierarchy, seems to threaten the soldiers, the local gentry, the bourgeoisie of Newbury and even its hooligans far more than the missiles, although the latter would be a prime target in the event of nuclear war. Can it be that the women are really right in seeing the Bomb and its phallic projectiles as the linch-pin of a system of patriarchal dominance? Caroline Blackwood does not ask such questions, but her absorbing, witty and compassionate narrative leads one to search for answers in this direction:

Greenham Common: Women at the War, edited by Barbara Harford and Sarah Hopkins (171pp. The Women's Press. £3.95. 0 7043 3926 9) is a collection of extracts from the diaries, journals and letters of over fifty women living at Greenham Common, which describe their experiences of living rough outside the United States airbase at Newbury. The extracts cover the practicalities of living rough, arrests and evictions, the government's timetable for the introduction of Cruise and Pershing missiles, the imprisonment of protesters, the use of force, the

Dependence without end

Gordon K. Lewis

RAYMOND CARR
Puerto Rico: A colonial experiment
477pp. New York University Press. \$32.50.
08147 1389 0

It is a typically North American practice for philanthropic foundations and "think-tanks" to publish big tomes on matters of topical interest, usually characterized more by public policy considerations than by severe scholarship. This book on Puerto Rico by the Oxford historian Raymond Carr fits neatly into that category. The patrons – in this case The Twentieth Century Fund – have money, prestige, a certain standing in the academic world, and connections in Washington. They pride themselves on their independence; but in reality they rarely venture beyond the ideological boundaries set by the North American "liberal" Establishment. Whether private bodies or federal agencies like the National Endowment for the Humanities, the tone of their publications, generally speaking, is prudence, a claimed "objectivity", an effort to be "fair", but more often than not they sound like position-papers for the Washington policy-makers and certainly never challenge the central principles of the North American business civilization. They play a role not dissimilar to that played by Chatham House in British studies.

It is not, I think, unfair to say that Carr's book carries the hallmarks of that temper. Yet, to begin with, it has its virtues. He has done his homework in the vast literature that exists on the Puerto Rican colonial problem. His style is that of the conventional British historiography, so that there is nothing of the North American social sciences jargon that confuses profoundly with obscurity. He is equally at home with the Spanish-language sources as with the English. He does not come to bury Puerto Rico, nor to praise it, as have so many expatriate visitors to the Caribbean who have tried, absurdly, to be more revolutionary than the local nationalist intelligentsia itself. He obviously talked extensively with Puerto Rican academics and politicians, although it does not appear that he did the same with the Puerto Rican woman and man in the street; his generalizations on the state of local public opinion would sound more reassuring if we knew that he had got drunk with the locals in a broken-down rumshop in Lares or Barranquitas. His sense of history enables him to present a good discussion of United States–Puerto Rican relationships since the conquest of the Spanish-American war, although it is fuller for the post-1945 period than it is for 1898–1945. In this sense the book provides an excellent introduction for a North American public whose ignorance about their tropical colonial possession is colossal, summed up in the early observation of the Chicago wit Mr. Dooley that no American ever heard about Puerto Rico unless a friend got a job down there. It will be even more informative for an European public who cannot tell the difference between Puerto Rico and Costa Rica.

Carr's editors, in their foreword, assert that it is a book of "dispassion and sensitivity". They thereby do him a disservice. For, in truth, the book is just the opposite, full at once of passion and insensitivity. The passion is there in a number of ways. Despite its ambiguous title – it really should have been termed the colonial condition, not a colonial experiment – Carr is quite clear that Puerto Rico is in dependent colonial status; that the United States stubbornly refuses to recognize that fact; that the island of Vieques is a bombardment training-ground is outright military imperialism; that the early industrialization programme based on expatriate investment capital has failed to solve the problem of continuing structural unemployment; that "anti-colonial" nationalist protest is stifled by a programme of massive transfer of federal funds to the island economy; so that welfare, not work sustains the economy; that the great dream of the Popular Democratic Party, under the leadership of Luis Muñoz Marín, which would establish Puerto Rico as a partner in a bilateral compact in a new unique experiment in American federalism, has faded away with the passage of time, leaving the island in a state of

with at least thirty-eight areas of public life and policy under the jurisdiction of the President, the Congress, and the assorted federal regulatory agencies; so that, in sum, as has been well said, Puerto Rico is characterized by a ruling class that does not rule and a working class that does not work. It is clear that Carr feels deeply about much of this, although only too frequently he hides behind the subterfuge of arguing that this is what the "critics" say. Sometimes, regrettably, he seems not to have the courage of his own convictions.

So, there is also much insensitivity in the argument. Carr enjoys himself discussing the foibles and follies of the *independentista* nationalist groups. Some of the time he has a point. But there are two things to be said in their defence. First, if at times they sound shrill and even xenophobic that is caused, as everywhere in colonialism, by the colonial condition itself. So long as that condition continues it will breed what Adam Smith called "the paltry raffle of colony faction". It is historically unsound to blame the colonial victim for the colonial condition. Carr's discussion, for example, of the Puerto Rican Nationalist leader Albizu Campos sounds at times like an eighteenth-century English noble lord sneering at the antics of Tom Paine. Secondly, every anti-colonial nationalist movement must build on what it can, whether, as in the Puerto Rican case, it is the defence of the Spanish language, an effort to sustain a local creole artistic tradition, or even, for that matter, an admittedly romanticized vision of the pre-American past. Every people, as Burke said, must have some compensation for its slavery.

Carr's lack of sympathy for much of this goes hand in hand with the use of pejorative epithets. He speaks of the "paranoia" of the nationalist groups, but says little of the "paranoia" of the United States military-industrial imperialism that they confront. The word "anti-American" occurs with such monotonous frequency that it blatantly belies the claim that this is an "objective" book. Nationalism, after all, is not necessarily anti-American. On different occasions he snidely notes that the investigative work of a local group like the

Centre for the Study of Puerto Rican Reality, with its radical orientation, is supported by funds from the Ford Foundation; he seems not to realize that his own work, handsomely subsidized by The Twentieth Century Fund, may be open to the same malicious innuendo. He argues that the *independentista* weakness is to romanticize the old pre-1898 traditional Spanish society just as nationalist historians in India have romanticized the old pre-British Indian civilization; but there is something romantic in his own invocation of Muñoz Marín, the *Popular* founder of modern Puerto Rico, thus reinforcing in his own way the idolatrous cult of Muñoz. And, finally, in a truly astonishing remark, he writes that American imperialism has a "wider purpose, the gift of a superior civilization to what we would now call a part of the Third World, the incorporation of a backward society into the value-system of the Anglo-Saxon democracies". The ethnocentrism of that remark not only cavalierly ignores the other civilizations – pre-Columbian, African, and Spanish – that have, historically, shaped modern Puerto Rico. Even worse, it implicitly endorses the American claim to possess a Manifest Destiny that makes the United States the self-appointed policeman of the Western hemisphere.

Apart from all this, the book is too descriptive, too narrative in form, too episodic, too semi-journalistic, too anecdotal to do full justice to its theme. The author presents all of the perplexities and conundrums of Puerto Rican society, but omits, except in occasional asides, any comprehensive answer. He sees that the "first line careless rapture" about the vaunted Commonwealth status has evaporated, yet insists that it is still a real option. He assumes, as the word "experiment" in his title suggests, that there is an American colonial policy, yet admits in his text that such a policy does not really exist in Washington. He concludes that it is the moral obligation of the United States Congress to solve the Puerto Rican constitutional status dilemma; yet he does not even begin to consider the possibility that perhaps one day the Puerto Rican people may take the issue into their own hands, as Haiti, Cuba,

Nicaragua, and Grenada have done throughout Caribbean history. That omission, perhaps, flows from his failure to place Puerto Rico within its natural orbit, that of the wider regional Caribbean. Indeed, reading the book, few readers would understand that Puerto Rico, by geography, history and culture belongs to a common Caribbean family.

In sum, the book lacks, what every good book should possess, an over-arching philosophical vision, an ideological drive that puts the stamp of the intellectual personality of the author upon what he writes. That might be because of his editorial mandate. "The major problem in mounting a Puerto Rican study", says the editorial foreword, "has been the difficulty in finding a scholar, whether Puerto Rican or American, who had not already made up his mind about what the relationship ought to be." Not only is that obtuse observation a gratuitous slur on all those authors – to mention the Americans only – who have not sought to impose their own solution upon their Puerto Rican readers: Julian Steward, Robert Anderson, Thomas Mathews, Henry Wells, Sidney Mintz, and others. It also repeats the liberal myth about "objectivity", almost as if making up one's mind about a problem is some sort of doctrinal heresy. It forgets Lord Acton's dictum that the historian must not only be witness, he must also be judge.

In the end-result, then, the book disappoints. Notwithstanding that it brings together an enormous amount of information, that it brings the Puerto Rican question up-to-date, not least of all that it is written with characteristic English flair and grace, it ultimately fails the Actonian test. We see the natural trees; we do not see the philosophical wood. In that sense, it compares unfavourably with other books on the general colonial question, Paine Dutt's early book, for example, on British India, or Ken Post's more recent volumes on colonial Jamaica, or Walter Rodney's book on British Guiana. Carr leaves Puerto Rico, as he finds Puerto Rico, in limbo. So that if, indeed, as the saying goes, Oxford is the home of lost causes, then we may have to conclude that Puerto Rico must now be added to the list.

Cassandras at camp

Malise Ruthven

CAROLINE BLACKWOOD
On the Perimeter
113pp. Heinemann. £5.95.
0434 07468 3

Caroline Blackwood first visited the Cruise missile protest camps at Greenham Common in March this year. Her curiosity had been aroused by the "loathsome and frightening" adjectives applied to the women peace campaigners in the newspapers. Auberon Waugh had said the women smelt of "fish paste and bad oysters". Other less gifted polemicists had described them as "screaming destructive witches", "sex-starved harpies" or just a "bunch of lesbians". They were accused of being in the pay of Moscow, or of being red spies who lived like dogs and smeared the town of Newbury with excrement.

In her partisan, but far from one-sided, account of the Greenham camps, Blackwood relates what she found out through talking both to the women, and to their opponents. Nightmarish terrors of nuclear war or accident had driven the protestors to exchange home and family for the cold, the mud, the damp and squalor of the "benders", the home-made tents made from branches and sheets of polythene which are the only dwellings available to the women because tents and caravans have been forbidden by the local council. Here, they

withstand the harassment of policemen and bailiffs and the sexual taunting of the soldiers, as well as the sheer tedium of maintaining a round-the-clock vigil at the entrance to the base, because "they found it impossible to have faith in the untested theory that deterrence gives humanity endless safety". The only relief in this monotonous existence is the occasional visit to the courtroom in Newbury or a spell in Holloway Prison which many regard as a rest camp.

As Blackwood sees it, the protest is a matter of feeling rather than politics. The women's attitude may appear simplistic, but they have a "common sense approach" which stems directly from their daily experience. "It was the protest of all women who have ever looked after children. It gave a black warning that came direct from personal experience. If you let children play with dangerous instruments, it won't be very long before there is a hideous accident."

In contrast with this down-to-earth view of nuclear matters, Blackwood's account of the childishness of the people defending the base arouses deep misgivings. The soldiers behind the wire keep the women awake at night by shouting obscenities. Once, on leaving the base in a military coach, they bared their bottoms in a gesture that had clearly been rehearsed with parade-ground precision. Even the American children living in the base appear to have been trained to make the "Fack You" sign as they pass by in the school bus.

Not all of this silliness is on the anti-protestor side. The ideological lesbians cloud the issue by ostentatiously hugging and kissing in the courtroom or at the approach of the TV crews. But, according to Blackwood, all the women arouse a degree of hostility far in excess of any inconvenience they may cause to soldiers, policemen or residents living near the base. Shopkeepers and publicans refuse to serve them; hooligans unexpectedly join forces with the establishment and actualize the verbal insults by smearing the benders with excrement and pig's blood. A huntsman goes berserk in one of the camps, flaying the women with his whip while abandoning his hounds to the oncoming traffic. One of the leaders of RACE – Ratepayers Against Greenham Encampments – leaps out of her top-floor window and actually cheers one of the missiles as it leaves the base.

The anti-protestors seem to lose all sense of proportion. For them it is the women's encampments, rather than the base itself that has become an eyesore. It is not the nine miles of fences and barbed wire, the acres of concrete, the hideous hangers and screaming jet aircraft that have desecrated this English common, once the haunt of the Pied Pyl-Catcher and the Little Ringed Plover, but the handful of sodden and bedraggled women, with their frumpy clothes, their pots of tea and their benders.

Why have these women aroused such irrational furies? Partly, no doubt, it is due to the same mythopoeic power that has made them

into saints and martyrs for peace groups all over the world. The hysterical response to the women, both by government and local establishments may really be due to underlying fears about nuclear war and the effectiveness of deterrence as a policy. Cassandra, as Blackwood points out, have never been popular. But there also appear to be deeper levels at which the rage of the anti-protestors is aroused. This spontaneous and voluntary association of females, without formal leadership or hierarchy, seems to threaten the soldiers, the local gentry, the bourgeoisie of Newbury and even its hooligans far more than the missiles, although the latter would be a prime target in the event of nuclear war. Can it be that the women are really right in seeing the Bomb and its phallic projectiles as the linch-pin of a system of patriarchal dominance? Caroline Blackwood does not ask such questions, but her absorbing, witty and compassionate narrative leads one to search for answers in this direction:

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Waking up from Franco

Denis Smyth

ROBERT GRAHAM
Spain: change of a nation
327pp. Michael Joseph. £14.95.
0 7181 2359 X

Britain's Ambassador to Spain during the Second World War, Sir Samuel Hoare, described Franco in 1941 as "the Brer Rabbit of dictators", noting both the Caudillo's inclination to lie "very low, often so low and so long that people think that he is dead or asleep" and his capacity for "unexpected agility" when "in actual danger of being trodden underfoot". Certainly, Franco's longevity in power was due, in part, to his tactic of remaining impassive in the face of domestic dissent and foreign condemnation. He made marginal adjustments in his political style and policies precisely in order to preserve the substance of his power and principles, as times changed. By outflanking his internal enemies and external critics he managed often to outlast them. Thus, when Franco was moved to comment publicly on the rapprochement with the capitalist democracies which ended his country's period of post-war ostracism, he did not admit to any change of attitude on his part: "If . . . our relations with the free world have tended to become normal this is not because Spain has changed. It is because the nations of the West have come to have a better attitude towards us."

What Franco failed to comprehend, however, was that, notwithstanding his talent for political immobility, "subterranean" forces could move the ground from under him. Robert Graham's book is the latest in a series of works by academics and journalists to analyse and assess the process of socio-economic transformation in Spain (over which his own unwitting and generally unwittingly chaotic

presided) which rendered Franco's reactionary rule irrelevant to the political requirements of a modernized country.

As *Financial Times* correspondent in Madrid from 1977 to 1982, Graham was well placed to observe democratization and deFrancoization in action. His account of these developments is enhanced both by the evidence he was able to gather in person and by the way in which his personal experience of the transition informs his judgments of, and reflections on it. Thus, he discovered that employers and government alike supported the successful bid by the socialist trade union, the UGT, to attract greater support from the working class in the 1982 union elections than its main rival, the communist Workers' Commissions. According to Graham, the centre-right government of the day and the right-wing employers' organization were so anxious to avoid communist domination of organized labour that they actually colluded in arranging strikes which the UGT could call and win.

Again, he notes there were several unreported confrontations between the government and the Spanish military in the early days after Felipe González's accession to power. However, observing that the armed forces yielded to an emphatic exercise of authority by the new socialist government, Graham concludes that the Spanish military "will obey a strong government, even if they do not like its policies; conversely they will exploit a weak government." The accuracy of this assessment seems borne out by the unfortunate results of the "softly softly" approach adopted by successive centre-right administrations towards the army, a tactic which proved to be self-defeating. For, not only were reactionary elements within the military persuaded that the democratic state was vulnerable to a frontal assault but even an abortive coup (like that of February 1981) could realize many of the *golpistas'* aims. Both the politicians and the people could

be intimidated into deferring to the military's anti-democratic sensibilities by fear of the armed forces forcibly challenging the constitutional order once again – indeed, as Graham also notes, they enjoy, even today, "an unacceptably broad zone of influence", the reduction of which is a major priority of the socialist government.

However, given the acuteness of this general analysis, it is perhaps surprising to find the author describing the promotion, out of turn, of General José Gabeiras Montero to the presidency of the joint chiefs of the General Staff as an "error". This appointment may have antagonized an officer corps obsessed with seniority as the sole criterion for professional advancement, and the incumbent's close association with the liberally-minded deputy premier in charge of defence, General Manuel Gutiérrez Mellado, doubtless accentuated the alienation of anti-democratic officers. However, the assistance which Gabeiras Montero lent the King, Juan Carlos, and Generals Sabino Fernández Campos and Francisco Laín García, in suppressing the *Teléfono* of February 23–4, 1981, demonstrates that the appointee also had a positive contribution to make to the consolidation of democracy in Spain. Still Graham's judgments are nothing if not stimulating.

The book, however, is a little marred by a series of minor but persistent errors in spelling and dating. Thus, the year of the founding of the Second Spanish Republic is mistakenly given, several times, as 1930, instead of 1931. Again, the conclusion of the important United States–Spanish bases agreement in 1953 is also antedated by a year. There are also six supporting notes/references for Chapter Two missing from the work. However, these failings do not seriously spoil a book whose competence and comprehensiveness, within its own clearly defined limits, make it a useful addition to the available literature.

On pinions free

Edward Mendelson

PETER CONRAD
The Art of the City: Views and versions of New York
329pp. Oxford University Press. £15.
019 5034082

This book is less a study of the art and literature of New York than a Dionysiac revel, with a few hundred writers, painters and photographers as its more or less willing participants. As in the *Bacchae* – the best commentary on Peter Conrad's book – the orgiasts all have a rollicking time, for a while. Social distinctions dissolve. Individuals seem interchangeable. As long as the party lasts, anyone can do anything, make anything, be anything. And woe to legalistic Pentheus, intent on discriminations and distinctions, when he tries to look in.

Walt Whitman, "the genius loci of this book, as he is of New York", serves as Conrad's Dionysus. His Pentheus is Henry James, who receives hard knocks for writing of a New York that "enforces social distinctions that Whitman's city abolishes". Pentheus excepted, almost everyone is welcome – in the words of Euripides' Dionysus, "compelled to wear my orgies' livery". From Washington Irving and Stephen Crane, through Alfred Stieglitz and the photographer who styled himself Weegee, to Robert Rauschenberg and Claes Oldenburg, one celebrates after another dances to Conrad's tune. Some provide epic origins for New York; others bring back images from its slums or report on the views through neighbours' windows; still others reshape the city into abstraction or collage: some praise its affluent towers or probe its criminal depth; some perch on its bridges, some accumulate its junk. Some manage to be in two places at once. A photograph by Margaret Bourke-White discussed on page 96 is reproduced on page 255. A painting by John Sloan reproduced on page 91 is discussed on page 271. No cross-references are provided, and the index is no help (it also tends to omit hard-to-spell names like Jindřich Štyrský). Perhaps this is deliberate. Seating plans are seldom provided at an orgy.

Euripides' Dionysus summoned all the Theban women to Cithereon "rich and poor alike, even the daughters of Cadmus". Conrad is almost as inclusive. Few books of cultural history have accommodated so many artists and works without degenerating into lists of names and titles. The revellers all receive a sentence or two of interpretation, even if the prevailing frenzy compels them to shed their dates of birth and death, historical background, and anything resembling a career with a beginning, middle, or end. The guests are too busy tumbling in for Conrad to bother with introductions. Melville's *Pierre* and Pynchon's *V* get left outside, but Conrad is admirably quick to admit neglected thrillers like Vera Caspary's *Laura* and Cornell Woolrich's *Phantom Lady*. He goes out of his way to put some splendid 1930 woodcuts by Joaquín Vaqueró (four of them previously unpublished) in positions of honour at the head of each chapter. Where he is surprisingly restrictive is in his imposition of a colour-bar. No blacks are admitted. A few intrepid artists and writers – Van Vechten, Lorca, Le Corbusier – make side trips to Harlem, and Fitzgerald looks down on the place from a train; but they merely watch the dancing and return alone. In Conrad's New York the Harlem Renaissance never occurred.

The reason may be that Conrad's New York is tropically a projection of himself rather than a city shaped by those who live there. Whitman, his model and hero, was expert in the "exponentiation of himself". "He holds within him a germinal city", Conrad writes: "In furnishing that city, he's running off copies of himself, in a typographic feat of self-renewal." As Whitman filled Manhattan with Whitmans, so Conrad would people the Isle with Conrads. Whitman "likened his own creativity to the cloning of the many-cylindered steam printing-press", and found in typesetting a process similar to that whereby he postulated the democratic city of New York and filled it with self-images. In a sentence like this (the book has many like it) Whitman becomes a self-image of Conrad, the quotation in the first half claims authority for the assertion in the second, but in fact the assertion is strictly Conrad's own. Here

and elsewhere Conrad seems less an avatar of Whitman than an adept at a rhetorical shell-game. When a writer does not say what he wants him to say, he is glad to make up the deficiency. He writes: "In 'A Font of Type' Whitman describes the mechanical letters as a seedbed". Whitman's poem does nothing of the kind. Even when Conrad provides an extended quotation he does not hesitate to misrepresent it immediately after. Quoting Ayn Rand on skyscrapers under construction whose "girders stuck out like bones through broken skin", he contrives to find in that phrase the nearly opposite suggestion "that the skyscraper is a body which has dispensed with the soft cladding of flesh".

Even more than black faces and Henry James, prim Consistency and fussy Accuracy find a cold welcome at Conrad's revels. On page 24 the development of Manhattan moves "up and across the island"; on page 25 it moves "up not across". The city's "bequest to us is to collectivize us" on page 3; on page 28 "the city makes lost souls of us all". In one chapter, the criminals photographed by Weegee, when "hustled into the police wagon, hide their faces behind handkerchiefs and vainly beg Weegee not to publicize their shame". A few chapters later, Weegee's "criminals cooperated, he noted, by posing as they stepped down from the police wagon". Perhaps a quick ride in the Black Maria was enough to change their attitude. A Paul Cadmus painting, as Conrad sees it, shows "a litter of emptied bottles and circumcised consumed bananas". The painting itself, for good iconographic reasons, shows only one bottle and one banana-peel, no more circumcised than any other. But even Pen-

theus, when Dionysus got hold of him, saw double.

Euripides' bacchants made wine spring from the earth. Conrad's artists wield powers a bacchant might envy. Manet, for example, makes almost anything happen. It is not enough that "Impressionism is inaugurated when, in 1853, Manet's model takes off her clothes to enjoy her lunch on the grass" (she probably didn't, by the way, since "Manet's model" was Raphael); in another chapter it is "Realism" that "begins with . . . Manet's girl at the picnic". Weegee's many powers, anywhere outside this book, would be mutually exclusive. On page 155 his "photographic act is the equivalent of a hold-up", on page 273 "the equivalent of an arraignment". Elsewhere the photographic act, "is electrocution" and even "approaches detonation". Identities are as fluid in Conrad's New York as they are in any bacchic ecstasies. "Those bundled Sunday newspapers strewn on the sidewalk at the beginning of *Naked City* could just as well be corpses". Sooner or later, everything in this book turns into something else. "Implantation makes the globe an egg." "At a certain point, New York grows so tall that it leaves the earth and enters orbit: then the overreaching Tylon becomes the turning Perisphere." Four American presidents could not dislodge J. Edgar Hoover from the office of FBI director; one touch of Conrad's wand and Herbert Hoover is there instead. It is a short step from the state of mind in which persons are indistinguishable to the state of mind in which they are dispensable. One of Conrad's favourite and recurring images is that of F. Scott Fitzgerald as he ended a solitary alcoholic rampage on Fifth Avenue "and instigated a

giddy parade by rolling empty champagne bottles down the roadway".

Aspiring to the powers of Dionysus, Conrad tends to sound more like Euripides' *Troisaines*, decked out incongruously in fawnskin while delivering a learned lecture on philology. His prose, although flecked with glittering phrases, is almost impenetrably glutinous. Reading 300 pages of it feels like swimming through a sea of oatmeal. It can be an awfully long haul to the end of some of his sentences: "In its transit through the body the city has been ingested impressionistically and regurgitated abstractly, consumed as material or sensual food but transformed within Picabia into an unmitigated idea, a conceit, or what Duchamp called a 'cervellité'." Or: "American romanticism isn't an individual retrenchment from the indifferently many but the individual's dilation to begot or contain the many, and even when Whitman surveys the empty western plains, he sees them, like the city, as congested – infinitude, not vacancies, 'that vast Something, stretched out on its own unbounded scale, unconfined.'" No wonder Conrad often seems exhausted by what he calls "the chore of symbolism". When the going gets especially burdensome, he tries to ease the way with studied informalities, such as the ellipsis of "is" in sentences that include terms from Greek rhetoric; eg, "The shoe's a metonym for the buildings".

Conrad describes this book as "an attempt to understand a place that fascinates me, and to understand my own fascination". Whatever the value of *The Art of the City* to readers interested in the art of the city, Peter Conrad's book will have enormous value to readers who want to understand his fascination with it.



"Room Full of Mirrors" by Rainer Fetting (with Luciano Caselli), reproduced from An International Survey of Recent Painting and Sculpture by Kynaston McShine (364pp. The Museum of Modern Art, New York, distributed by Thames and Hudson. £16.65. 0 87070391 9).

The critic as martyr

Sean French

JOHN LAHR
Automatic Vaudeville: Essays on star turns
241pp. Heinemann. £8.95.
0434 401889

The least we demand from a critic is a basic level of sympathy and enthusiasm for the medium he's dealing with, though even this can be difficult to sustain. Kenneth Tynan, once wrote that after seven years of being a professional theatre critic he was having to invent responses to the plays he saw. John Lahr seems to have reached a similar state of disenchantment though, unlike Tynan, without abandoning criticism. The last essay in *Automatic Vaudeville*, modestly entitled "Notes on Fame", is an assault on the idea of celebrity, the argument being that it reveals a sickness at the heart of Western – especially North American – culture. Lahr concludes the essay (and the book) with frenetic gloom:

The rigid ethic of individualism leads to stagnation. Fame standardizes the goals and the measures of achievement. The result is a frenzied yet monotonous society, among its stage-managed sense of artifice, where the names of the actors change but the show remains the same.

This compels the reader to wonder why he

should want to read what a man who hates fame so much has to say about famous people. But by then it's too late: the book is over.

Automatic Vaudeville is a collection of essays about performers and writers, most of which have already been published in magazines in Britain and the United States. The author asserts in his introduction that writers "often collude in the romance of individualism by making a myth of the isolation out of which their work emerges". Lahr's criticism thus attempts to place his subjects within some sort of political-cultural context. However, far from being the kindly, comradely process he suggested in his introduction, this placement is turned by Lahr into a weapon which, once forged, is then turned on the hapless artist. The first essay, on Stephen Sondheim, is typical. Lahr begins, with the judicious assertion: "Musicals celebrate two things: abundance and vindictive triumph." It emerges that he needs to say this because at the end of the essay, when he reaches Sondheim's *Sweeney Todd*, a vindictively triumphant musical if ever there was one, he will argue that, far from being outside the mainstream American musical, it is "as traditional a piece of American fare as apple pie".

Lahr identifies the character of an artist, and then accuses him of, say, not possessing them; he locates the performer's milieu and

then accuses him of being trapped in it. Woody Allen is denounced – yet again – for moving to more serious films; Joan Didion and her husband John Gregory Dunne are indicted for what seems little more than the crime of being rich and successful and living in Los Angeles. A characteristic Lahr argument is his dismissal of Hunter S. Thompson's subjective "gonzo" journalism: "Thompson means to satirize the Las Vegas 'greedheads'; but unwittingly it is his own numbed greed he exposes. His credit card spree, his drug bills, his high living don't penetrate the American Dream, only indulgence." Ahah, says Lahr, you're caught, but yet again the argument is bafflingly circular. He accuses Thompson of doing nothing more than what he has always claimed to do.

Automatic Vaudeville is particularly disappointing because Lahr has written two fine biographies, the celebrated account of Joe Orton, *Prick Up Your Ears*, and a memoir of his father, Bert Lahr, an interesting, embittered vaudeville performer, who played the Cowardly Lion in the film *The Wizard of Oz* and was in the first American production of *Waiting for Godot*. Obviously, John Lahr is more at home with the martyrs of showbiz, the betrayed, the cast aside, even the murdered, than with the performers' milieu and

Mobilizing the middle classes

Jeremy Noakes

RICHARD F. HAMILTON
Who Voted for Hitler?
664pp. Guildford: Princeton University Press.
£37.15 (paperback, £12.30).
0691 093954
THOMAS CHILDERS
The Nazi Voter: The social foundations of
Fascism in Germany, 1919-1933
367pp. University of North Carolina Press.
£27.20.
08078 1570 5

It is well known that the Nazis achieved power in January 1933 not by winning a parliamentary majority but rather through a backstairs intrigue involving an alliance with the traditional German elites. Nevertheless, the 37 per cent of the vote won by the NSDAP in the Reichstag election of July 1932 not only made it by far the largest party but would probably have been sufficient to give it victory under the British electoral system. Moreover, it was the Nazis' substantial electoral base which both obliged the German elites to take them seriously and indeed formed their most attractive feature for those elites. The questions of who voted for Hitler and why are therefore of central importance for an understanding of the Nazi takeover. The two books under review both make substantial contributions.

On the question of who voted Nazi, both authors take issue with the dominant explanation according to which it was the lower middle class who provided the mass electoral support for the Party. In his first section Richard F. Hamilton provides a powerful critique of some of the previous literature and the shaky evidence on which its thesis of lower-middle-class support was based. He then moves on to a detailed electoral analysis of a number of major cities through which he shows that the Nazis did best not so much in those districts where the lower middle class were present in large numbers, but rather in overwhelmingly upper-middle-class districts. Examples of these are Zehlendorf in Berlin (36.4 per cent compared with 28.6 per cent in the city as a whole) or Blankenese in Hamburg which with 53.8 per cent had the largest Nazi vote of any district in the city and compared with 33 per cent for the city as a whole. This conclusion is confirmed by an illuminating analysis of the vacation vote, for example on cruise liners. Moreover, the author provides a subtle and perceptive analysis of the political attitudes and behaviour of urban white-collar workers, suggesting that the more marginal ones tended to vote SPD rather than Nazi. He also points out that the conservative DNVP found some support in working-class districts whose voters, the equivalent of working-class Tories, then proved vulnerable to the Nazis.

It is true that the sample of cities is limited (twelve) and in some respects unrepresentative – there are none from Central or East Germany where some of the largest concentrations of Nazi urban voters were to be found (eg, Breslau and Chemnitz). It is also true that the data for most of the cities are limited, making it impossible to compare the voting behaviour and social structure of all the various districts with equal success. And one could quibble about the categorization of some of the districts. Nevertheless, Hamilton has clearly proved his main point. It is an important one and it has hitherto been overlooked. However, having said that, it could be argued that he makes too much of it. As he admits, the Nazi vote declined in an inverse ratio to the size of the community; the Nazis did best in communities of less than 25,000 and generally worst in big cities. Hamilton argues that the evidence from rural areas suggests that voting patterns here, too, did not follow class lines. Villages tended either to vote overwhelmingly Nazi or for other parties, often depending on the attitude of the local opinion leaders. Moreover, religion played a crucial role. Catholic rural areas proving strongly resistant to Nazism, thus providing, in other words, another instance where Nazi support cannot be related to a single class category.

All this is true, though not new. In my view, however, it still does not dispose of the lower-middle-class thesis. Because of its urban emphasis, Hamilton focuses above all on the glamorous process.

white-collar workers – in German sociological parlance the "new Mittelstand". He ably succeeds in demonstrating that many white-collar workers had more in common with the working-class milieu from which they sprang than with the bourgeoisie; and voted SPD. He has much less to say about the "old Mittelstand" – the butchers and bakers and candlestick-makers who formed the core group of Nazi support. Furthermore, he tends to equate the lower middle class with its most marginal members – the small shopkeeper or artisan barely keeping his head above water, the low-grade clerk or salesman – Hans Fallada's "little man". He is right in his assumption that Nazi support did not derive primarily from this group. If, however, one broadens the category of lower middle class to include the reasonably prosperous retailer or artisan – the moderately successful small-town pharmacist or master butcher and the peasant farmer with a middle-sized holding, and these were hardly upper middle class – then it seems to me that it is difficult not to locate the majority of Nazi support among the lower middle class.

To answer the question of why people voted Nazi Hamilton focuses on the roles of the Nazi political cadres and the local press. As far as the first is concerned, regional studies of the Nazi Party have provided clear evidence of the important role played by the local organization. However, Hamilton tends to exaggerate the importance of the military background of these cadres as the key to their success. The ex-officers tended to gravitate towards the SA, which had nothing but contempt for what it saw as the Party bureaucrats and generated much friction, although it is true that many leaders on the political side also had some military experience. Moreover, the success of the cadres must be understood in terms of the particular local contexts in which they were operating. They had little success in penetrating working-class or Catholic districts, and even in the Protestant rural areas, where they achieved their biggest success, they did not so much burst in on and sweep aside a moribund bourgeois conservative or liberal establishment as take over from other parties. These had for a time successfully mobilized rural support (eg, the Schleswig-Holstein Landespartei, the Hanoverian Guelphs, the Bavarian Bauernbund) but had for various reasons proved incapable of sustaining their momentum.

Second, while the local press may well have played an important role in creating a climate in which members of the upper middle class in the cities were persuaded to vote Nazi – and the author puts forward plausible grounds for why it should have been so effective, for example the newness of most party loyalties after the disruption of the 1918 revolution and the complexity of the options facing most voters under the multiparty system of Weimar – it seems doubtful whether its role could have been quite as decisive as he suggests. To understand why some cities proved more vulnerable than others to the Nazi appeal one would need to look much further than the local press: for example, at such questions as recent history, particularly during the period 1918-23 when sharp political polarization occurred in some cities, less so in others, at the nature and health of the local economy and the local labour market, and at the quality and prestige of its previous political representatives.

Finally, the book has a basic structural flaw. In his preface the author admits that he has tried to cater for the interests of both historians and social scientists, each of whom will find some parts of the book commonplace and others new. Unfortunately, the result is likely to satisfy neither. As a historian I found Hamilton's analysis of the party system too long and unproductive. His lengthy quotations from monographs could have been summarized and the reader referred to those works via the footnotes. Above all, however, I feel that with his attack on the lower-middle-class thesis he has to some extent set up an Aunt Sally which he then proceeds to knock down very effectively. For, as he himself admits, historians of the period have now produced a much more differentiated picture of the social bases of Nazi support than the old "centrist" thesis of the marginal lower middle class, which derived in fact largely from social science literature.

In his study Thomas Childers shows a much surer grasp of the historical context in which the Nazis were operating. Indeed his introductory chapter provides a masterly account of the sociology of German electoral politics between 1871 and 1924. Then, on the basis of a sophisticated use of a wide range of electoral statistics, he defines the characteristics of the Nazi voters with a greater degree of precision than has hitherto been possible. One of his most significant points is that the Nazi constituency was not socially static. It changed substantially over time and in response to changing economic conditions. There was a core group among the old *Mittelstand* which predominated in the period 1924-8 and which, because of its long-standing discontent with the effects of modernization, proved vulnerable to the anti-modernist appeal of Nazism. At the same time, other groups, such as farmers and the upper middle class, were drawn in under the impact of economic crisis.

On the question of who voted Nazi, Childers' most significant findings are: first, that there was much less support for the Nazis among white-collar workers than had hitherto been thought – a point he first made in an important article some years ago and which Hamilton has now perceptively elucidated. Second, while the Party's membership tended to be younger than average, it found substantial electoral support among the older generation, many of whom were pensioners hit by the hyperinflation of the early 1920s. Third, he concurs with Hamilton's thesis about widespread upper-middle-class support. Those who voted Nazi were not generally uneducated, economically devastated or socially marginal. Finally, in the last Weimar elections women appear to have surpassed men in the Nazi electorate. Nazi propaganda evidently had some success in persuading women that their limited degree of emancipation had merely produced greater exploitation while devaluing traditional feminine roles in the home.

To explain why people voted Nazi, Childers has concentrated on the content and techniques of Nazi propaganda, examining the appeal of the messages addressed to particular sections of the community and the methods used to put them across. He attributes their success to a large extent to the effectiveness of the Nazi propaganda machine. This is not a new thesis, but it is one which he has developed in more detail than has been done hitherto. Indeed, he has perhaps exaggerated the importance of the national propaganda apparatus. It was arguably the remarkable initiative shown by the local Party organization and the role of local opinion leaders which proved most crucial to Nazi success.

What then is the state of our knowledge of Nazi electoral support after the appearance of these two books and, one must add, the work of Jürgen Falter in Germany? Who did vote for Hitler? Despite being somewhat battered by the heavy critical artillery mounted against it by both authors, it seems to me that the lower-middle-class thesis still stands, though in a modified form. Thus, it is now clear that the basis of Nazi support was much broader than has hitherto been believed. The Party gained substantial numbers of votes both from the upper middle class and the working class. Moreover, the upwardly mobile white-collar worker voting Nazi for fear of proletarianization has been shown to be something of a myth. Nevertheless, although the Nazi Party's social basis was broader than that of any other German party, with the exception of the Centre with Catholicism as its bond, it was not a true *Volkspartei*. The working class was heavily under-represented and as a result the party's mass basis came inevitably largely from the lower middle class. This voted Nazi primarily because of its distaste for, and fear of the Left and all it stood for, and because the Nazis had persuaded it that they were the party who would deal with this threat most effectively. The Nazis were essentially a movement of middle-class integration – a *Sammlungsbewegung*. If asked, therefore, who were the typical Nazi voters, I would still be inclined to quote Seymour Martin Lipset's famous verdict, which is a major target of both these books: "the ideal-type Nazi voter in 1932 was a middle-class self-employed Protestant who lived either on a farm or in a small community".

From our men on the spot

Paul Kennedy

F. L. CARSTEN
Britain and the Weimar Republic: The British documents
343pp. Batsford. £17.50.
0 7134 4221 2

In the half-century which has passed since the Nazi seizure of power, so much has been written about the collapse of Weimar German democracy that it sometimes seems impossible to believe that anything new can be discovered – or said – upon the topic. Yet even today new sources of all sorts, from town-hall files to private diaries, are still being unearthed and added to our stock of knowledge. While such additions are normally German in origin, F. L. Carsten's new book, *Britain and the Weimar Republic*, demonstrates what a vast amount of material is to be found in the records of foreign governments: in this case, the files of the Foreign Office and other British agencies which interested themselves in post-1919 Germany.

This book, however, is not a diplomatic history of Anglo-German relations, even if the documents used do cast light on those relations. What Professor Carsten has done, rather, is to study the voluminous reports made by Britons – ambassadors, attachés, councilors, consul-general, military officers in the Allied commissions and newspaper correspondents – upon German domestic politics during the Weimar Republic. Over 1,300 files in the Public Record Office have been consulted by the author as the basis for this account of the collapse of German democracy through British eyes. It is an extremely useful source for a number of reasons. First, so many of the British "men on the spot" were literally that: the Armistice Commission officers were in Berlin in December 1918 when the German front-line troops returned to a subdued reception from the population; during the great inflation of 1923, a vast fund of detail was collected about the impact of the economic crisis upon living conditions; and street clashes were reported on regularly, often at first hand or shortly after the event. The turbulent political career of Adolf Hitler can also be traced in these files, from the first report of the British consul in Munich (September 1920) on the National Socialist German Workers Party, to the ambassador Sir Horace Rumbold's famous dispatches just after the *Machtergreifung*. Not surprisingly, the clandestine process of German rearmament was carefully monitored.

A second reason for the usefulness of this source is that, to borrow Carsten's words, "some German ministers, above all Stresemann, were in the habit of talking confidentially to British diplomats in Germany, of unbending their hearts and expressing their secret worries to them". No doubt a lot of these utterances were nicely tailored for British ears, particularly at times of acute quarrels with the French or when reparations was on the agenda; but there are many other instances, especially when comments were made about domestic German politics, where there seems no reason to query the plausibility of what was being said by Stresemann or Schleicher or Papen.

Finally, although the book, as I have noted, is not essentially about Anglo-German relations, it does offer new material upon them, particularly since Carsten frequently refers to the minutes made by the Foreign Office permanent officials (minutes which, as is well known, were not reproduced in *Documents on British Foreign Policy 1919-1939*). If those remarks, like the reports themselves, often reveal some characteristic British ways of dealing with foreigners, they generally appear to have been sympathetic, balanced and informative. "Allowing for certain lapses", the author feels, "British policy towards Germany after the Great War emerges with considerable credit."

Britain and the Weimar Republic does not offer the reader any earth-shattering new facts, or present some challenging new interpretation about the rise of National Socialism. But it is an interesting and useful work, soberly presented and nicely synthesized. Once again, historians of twentieth-century Germany are in Professor Carsten's debt.

John L. ...

The nation's conscience

Owen Chadwick

DAVID L. EDWARDS
Christian England: Volume Three, From the eighteenth century to the First World War
 378pp. Collins. £12.95.
 00021543 X

It would be useful to have a study in the rise and fall of the word *respectability*. On one Sunday in 1886 about ten thousand people heard the Baptist Spurgeon preach. Why so many? It was not an organized mission with support from the media. These were normal services, at a famous church in London. Were the parish churches of a great modern city failing? Was the preacher a prodigy? — once he was a prodigy, when he was a boy; now he was a good preacher but not more. Was it a social reason? Were the new lower-middle classes struggling for respectability? And was it less than the best to want to be respectable? It could hardly be thought wrong to want to be respected. At some point the idea of respectability acquired the sense of external behaviour only, to mean a desire not to be religious but to be seen as religious. One would not have expected the crowded anonymity of a Spurgeon congregation to be well chosen if one only wished to be seen.

Here is one of the perplexing problems of the moral age of English history studied in Volume Three of David L. Edwards's *Christian England: From the eighteenth century to the First World War*. To what extent was the chapel a force within the Liberal Party, and later in the formation of the Labour Party? And in connection with that comes the problem, raised with anxiety in our own time, whether we must suspect a politicization of the Churches to carry with it a corruption of their essence. Provost Edwards has scruples on the point, but not serious doubts. He sees the leaders of Nonconformity being true to their essence in turning their inward-looking denominations outwards to the condition of England (and indeed of Ireland), and seeking to exercise a Christian moral judgment on society. He charts the rise and fall of the "Nonconformist conscience", the moral approval inherent in some of the support of Gladstone; the moral disapproval in the destruction of Parnell, the steady movement of Methodism, into totalitarianism; the first number of the Congregationalist *British Weekly* (1886) declaring that the paper would aim at advanced Liberalism and that its managers believed in progress because they believed in the advancing reign of Christ. Edwards does not exaggerate all this. At its deepest level, he says, "Nonconformity always

knew that it was not a political movement, but its origins lay in a spiritual hunger which the Church of England could not satisfy."

Conversely, how far were the Churches mainstays of Conservatism? Edwards has little use for Edmund Burke's Christian Conservatism, and talks of his counter-revolutionary rhetoric and his boring eloquence and his divine justification of the class structure. But there was more to Burke than that. Among Conservative prime ministers, Edwards admires the practical reformer Sir Robert Peel, and his "rare courage" in sacrificing his party to his new moral convictions. He accepts the proposition that it was Peel who invented the idea of politics as morality, and regards Disraeli as unscrupulous for destroying Peel's leadership of the party.

It is Gladstone whom Edwards in this book sees as the greatest of the Victorians, the most creative force in Victorian public life and a person whose deepest interest and most powerful inspiration was Christianity. Gladstone, he thinks, did more than anyone else to unify the rich and poor of the nation. His politics were certainly not party politics (even if on occasion they helped the party). For example, the policy over Irish Home Rule, which he adopted from moral ends as much as from practical, radically weakened the Liberal Party. What attracts Edwards to Gladstone is the evolution of the conscience; from the child of the slave-owner, through the young MP who opposed every social reform; to the still devout Anglican who came to trust the masses instead of the elite and who finally saw that almost all the causes which he defended as a young man were wrong.

Scholar-bishops come well out of the book. The archbishops do not fare so well. Of the Victorian Archbishops of Canterbury the first is defined as stately (I suspect wrongly; at least Howley was very unpompous); the next (Sumner) is marked out for his simplicity, and for his carrying of an umbrella; Longley is hard-working but unconstructive (which is on the whole a just verdict, though he invented Lambeth Conferences); the fourth (Tail) is praised for his liberalism in preventing the lines of orthodoxy being narrowed (truly an indispensable service at that moment), and rebuked for his illiberalism towards ritualistic clergymen; Benson was "out of touch with lay thought" (worse could be said of him); and Temple was a cautious liberal but so old that he did his real work before he was archbishop.

Very different are the bishops in the book who most attract. Heber, of Greenland's icy mountains, has a lovely little portrait, and we are even told that he rescued the reputation of

the clergy. Best of all is Coleridge Patteson, an intelligent linguist and anthropologist, swimming ashore on Pacific islands, pushing in front of him his top hat full of gifts for the islanders, until at last he came ashore to his murder on a beach, the most inspiring of all the Victorian martyrs.

Thus Conservatives do not come over very well. Dr Pusey was a saint if ever there was one. If anybody ever said that the Church of England could not produce saints they could not say it after Pusey. The modern Church of England cannot bear to put him into its new calendar of saints because he lived with both feet in the fourth century AD, and this was not without reserves a good stance for coping with Victorian England. It was rather like that of Pope Pius IX, who at much the same date condemned the idea that the Pope ought to reconcile himself with liberalism or progress. Another Conservative, John Keble, comes out far better, though he is said here to be "escapist" — just to minister to an obscure parish and be content; to have a quiet trust in Christian victory; to visit the cottages, and care for the young, and give the hymn "Blest are the pure in heart" as an unconscious self-portrait. Edwards sees the strength of Victorian religion in the roots — the uncharitable influence in homes, and families, and communities. They pretended at times to be better than they were, yet most of them were not hypocrites. They had energy and courage, which had their origins (he diagnoses) partly in evangelical religion, and partly in the secular circumstances of that age. This author values the simple priest in the parish, whether slum or country; the preacher to crowds of the working-class; the

sloggers among the urban poor, among them the Salvation Army.

Perhaps the best of many good things in this attractive book is the use of literature to illuminate the needs of divinity. In the face of Deism, and then of French radicals, and then of Darwin and modern science, the Churches must adapt their language and adjust their ideas about their own faith. Edwards shows Tennyson, and Browning, and Matthew Arnold, and Charles Dickens, struggling with the nature of faith. And if the author has a conviction on this matter, it seems to be this, if I understand him rightly: that no one has a chance of helping this vital process unless he or she combines two qualities not easy to combine; first, a free mind, open to truth wherever it may be found; and second, an authentic sense of the immediacy of religious experience. At first sight it is almost bizarre that the person whom Edwards sets as a counter to Darwin's world of thought is Gerard Manley Hopkins, with his marvellous ability to express in rare metre the immediacy and beauty of God in the world; almost like, as Edwards writes, "the rescue of the spirit of man from the prison house of a brutish materialism" (not that he is so crude as to accuse Darwin himself of materialism). Evidently on grounds of religion as well as of art, he loves Newman's *Dream of Gerontius*, and Elgar's setting of it to music. He admires the freest mind among the Roman Catholic Modernists, Friedrich von Hügel, because of his determination to reconcile sanctity with modern science, and simultaneously because of what is described here as a "massive" quality in his sense of the holiness and the omnipresence of God.

Tempering the soul

Alec Vidler

CLYDE F. CREWS
English Catholic Modernism: Maude Petre's Way of Faith
 156pp. Tunbridge Wells: Burns and Oates.
 £12.
 086012 1364

When about sixty years ago I became interested in the Roman Catholic modernists and started to collect their works, it was deemed to be an eccentric interest in a lost cause. But since the Second Vatican Council the subject has come to life notably and has proved to be popular with research students. The modernists were ardent letter-writers and much of their correspondence has been unearthed, published and commented on. Books and articles about various aspects of the movement and about the personalities involved have appeared in profusion. Learned, if not definitive, studies of the principal participants have been produced, and in the United States, for example, conferences of modernist researchers are held and their findings circulated. Whatever may be thought of their opinions, the modernists were a fascinating collection of people who shared what at that time was the quixotic aim of marrying the Vatican to modernity.

Hitherto, however, no book has been forthcoming about Maude Petre, who was certainly a principal participant and indeed the sole active devotee of the cause when the others had died, or broken with the Church, or retreated into silence. Her name is chiefly associated with that of Father George Tyrrell, who died in her home at Storington and whose life she wrote. But she was also a close friend of Baron von Hügel, Henri Bremond and Alfred Loisy, as well as of erratic characters like Wilfrid Scavenius Blunt. Incidentally, Bremond was much more of a modernist than she probably realized, as became evident when the authorship of his pseudonymous book about Loisy (*Un Clergé qui n'a pas trahi*) was at length disclosed. I used to wonder about her relationship with Tyrrell. Her diaries, which were at one time in my keeping and are now in the British Museum, eventually made it clear that she had been deeply in love with him but entirely respected his commitment to celibacy; and in fact she made a vow of celibacy herself.

Maude Dominica Petre (born on the feast of St Dominic) came of an old aristocratic Catholic family which in the eighteenth century had figured in the Cisalpine movement. Thus, though Maude herself had a strictly orthodox upbringing and was haunted by the fear of hell she was being true to her family tradition when she became a dedicated critic and opponent of ultramontanist and supporter of the modernists, while remaining a steadfastly devoted Roman Catholic till the end of her long life. *English Catholic Modernism: Maude Petre's way of faith*, which has been carefully researched, explains how she fell foul of ecclesiastical authority because of what she did on behalf of Tyrrell, and how ingeniously and courageously she withstood the demand of the bishop who wanted to impose the anti-modernist oath upon her, the only woman upon whom such a demand was made. The result was that she was excommunicated in one diocese but not in others.

She had a lively and independent mind and was an indefatigable writer of articles, pamphlets and books on a wide range of topics. It cannot be said that she contributed original ideas to the modernist movement, but she was a diligent collector and disseminator of other people's ideas. She certainly wrote too much, and while Clyde F. Crews includes an account of her writings he makes no extravagant claims for them. She was not a literary stylist like Tyrrell, Bremond and Loisy. Her mind was perhaps too open and welcoming to novel opinions. I remember when I was conversing with her towards the end of her life, she said something that moved me to interject, "But that is pantheism", to which she replied characteristically, "Yes, I suppose it is, but I am not sure that that is a fatal objection."

In addition to her interest in ideas, she was active in public service and in many philanthropic and idealistic movements. In the Second World War, although nearly eighty years of age, she insisted on remaining in London during the blitz: "she took on the volunteer work of fire-watcher, going around her neighbourhood at nights complete with helmet and uniform trousers, carrying sand buckets." I share the impression of the Anglican Archdeacon A. L. Lilley, who knew the modernists well, and who said after her funeral in 1942, when she was buried in a grave adjoining Father Tyrrell's — though like him without the rites of the Church — that Maude Petre "was one of the rarest and most finely tempered Christians of our generation."

from The Inquisitor

We had among us, not so much a spy.
 As a recording chief-inquisitor

Browning, "How It Strikes a Contemporary"

II: The Price

The Senior Tutor has lent you his typescript
 On 'Masculine Imagery in Donne'.
 It would embarrass you to say so
 But it somehow lacks the brilliance
 Of his conversation. Tact, then — silence is best.
 The college garden blossoms with tongues.
 End-of-term dances, tennis at midnight,
 The summer solstice — you know even now
 It can't go on like this, there's a price to pay.

She was just twenty-one, nice enough.
 Left to itself it might have lasted six months.
 But now this third ghosted beside you,
 Wrapped in a lucid mantle, crouched, hooded,
 You cannot tell yet whether man or woman
 (You dare not think whether yours or another's),
 Only that morning in the oasthouse
 Laying to rest the panic and reproaches:
By now even the fingernails are formed.

So this was love, like Lady's Slipper seeding
 Despite itself, a podburst of confetti
 Settling on the mourners by the churchyard gate.
 You hardly know her but her body's changed
 Already, her nipples darkening to blue.
 You bask in the cool of the canal-bank.
 You inhale the breath of freezer-shelves.
 You spread guide-books on a table, where by the end
 Of August your Europe is covered in dust.

Straightening and re-shaping a paperclip
 The Senior Tutor sounds faintly appalled.
 He's kept his windows tight all summer.
 Donne has been revised: *I make this link between
 The hurrying-on of the comma'd line-ends
 And the seducer's haste — it's going to rattle
 All the Griersonites.* Coaxing the blind half-blind
 He keeps his back to you: *No luck, I'm afraid,
 With your fellowship, but something else....*

That winter McAlpine cranes laboured and spun.
 High above the classroom men in yellow helmets
 Strutted round like Hannibal on the Alps.
 You were fitting children for offices,
 Their heads bowed, their biros toeing the line,
Something to tide you over. Rachel's mind
 Seemed to have gone completely. She moved about
 Like some long-legged seabird, plumaged with
 The babythings she'd smother at her breast.

The child came early and was delicate.
 He lay under his cloche like a frail plant,
 Seemed certain to die. These nights in the hothouse
 You cannot think straight or be sure of anything
 But this ward of animal terror,
 The authentic image of the world....
 Until your son comes home at last, wall-eyed,
 His silky skull throbbing like a hamster's,
 A stranger and intruder, whom you love.

The ghosts of the smoky staffroom affect
 To be delighted by the news. They mistrust
 Your appointment. They've observed you observing.
 That trick of saying nothing when the knives
 Are out at tea-break has brought you both fear
 And prestige. You're friends with three women
 Who feel like stones at the tidemark — cold, hard,
 But with that alikeness underneath.
 And with Maclelland, guerrilla of the text:

*The horses in this poem, with their mares
 Of iron, symbolize a challenge to the state.
 Their 'dinned hooves' are the drums of revolution,
 They have thrown their jockeying leaders.*

*They are like gods hiding in the outfields
 Of the system, the beautiful ones
 Who will return to set the ghostly cities right.
 'Whinnying with rage', as the poet puts it,
 They feel the power within them to stampede.*

Harmless, no doubt, but Fitzroy loves it,
 Glubbing a Highland whisky in your glass.
 Donne? He's had no time for Donne of late,
 What with reviewing fiction for the *TLS*
 And re-reading the Russian classics
 (*A stick to beat the new boys with. Have you read
 John Fowles? I can't believe he's any good.*)
 It's all there in his drawer of index-cards.
 The names of the infamous on its tongue.

Another drink? Yes, you will need another
 Before disclosing any more. Come, come,
 You must not think of this as treachery:
 They are children playing near the flames
 Of history, who need protection from themselves.
 The names are unimportant, a matter
 For us and these four walls. And in exchange
 The formal letter, dropping like destiny
 Into the stained glass puddle of your hall.

If this were art you might despise yourself
 And confide to notebooks a squalid poetry
 Of excuse. But this is verse without the end-stops.
 Last night was your entrée to the meeting-house:
 Trots, feminists, fugitive professors,
 Ex-cobblers, martyrologists and Beats,
 They welcomed you with Maclelland and spoke
 Of the attempt on the Observatory
 And the Conrad assignment next week.

And Rachel and Ben? You'll do your best
 To keep them out of this. Today, from your desk,
 You see her climbing the hill with him,
 A plastic carrier-bag lumpy with
 New vegetables wedged inside the pushchair.
 They move so painfully, with his hanging back
 To pick up stones or daisies, you have to step
 Out of the lamplight and hurry down
 To meet them, your family, the one clean thing.
 BLAKE MORRISON

A Quotation

Raindrops hang from the washing line like inverted
 Commas. Someone is disarranging my head,

Someone is grating my lungs into flakes. Who is it?
 The morning is God's quotation among the weather.

Who are those crowds, their voices shuffling incessantly,
 Trampling on silence? Don't they know silence is holy?

Who is it keeps on shaking the glass in my hand,
 Spilling innocent water? Who has torn holes

In the daylight, down which I drown slowly?
 The sensible world is too much, too much for a man.

The smouldering red of the birches, the skittering sun
 On the puddles fills the morning with early spring.

Someone has opened the only gate in my head:
 I stumble through it onto stony sentences.

Why is it all in a hurry? Why are those clouds
 Lurking like abstract nouns to smother the morning.

To end the quotation? Who had arranged
 This secular drabness for the afternoon?

LAURENCE LERNER

Firm instructions

Richard Inledon

"BY A PRIEST"
We Believe: A simple commentary on "The Catechism of Christian Doctrine Approved by the Archbishops and Bishops of England and Wales"
 258pp. Available from Dr A. R. D. Mathias,
 Peterhouse, Cambridge. £7.
 09509189 03

We Believe is a course of instruction by "A Priest" to a would-be Catholic. That the priest is Mgr Alfred Gilbey is no real secret. So it is no surprise to find the author unfailingly courteous and patient, and insisting that the reader's own prayer and reflection must accompany the exposition. It is equally no surprise to see where he stands on the issues that have divided Catholics for twenty years: by basing the course on the "Penon" Catechism he has told us anyway.

For those who see the Second Vatican Council as having opened up new territory which the Catholic Church has still to explore, the Catechism is an old skin for new wine; these coexist uneasily with others for whom the Council (which the author quotes extensively) did little more than put old wine into a new skin.

Across this gulf, it would be pointless to criticize in detail. Given its premisses, the work can seldom be faulted. Its defects are those of

its model: effective defusing of Christianity's explosive power by distinguishing counsels from commandments (keep the Decalogue, discount the Sermon on the Mount); a spiritual individualism, dismissing attempts to build the kingdom of God on earth, more reminiscent of Luther than of Innocent III; lack of any reference to Scripture as a real source for faith and Christian nourishment (the Catechism's own "habit of adducing texts from Holy Scripture" is noted as a phenomenon calling for explanation).

Even in pre-conciliar terms, the image of the vine and the branches is pressed beyond what it will bear: "the complete identity between the Church and Jesus Christ Himself"; "seeing her as a Person, that Person being Christ" — and very plainly *not* being you or me or any of the people of God (a concept nowhere in evidence). This Church is explicitly exempted from the need to refer to any criterion outside itself — a super-Person always inappellably right. (For Church read Party, and we are indeed in 1984.)

Good humour slips occasionally towards the end, but reappears in the appendix. This much-misunderstood essay plainly relativizes those accidents in the Church which are to the author's taste as much as those which are not. But has he not brought a Trojan Horse into his own fortress? The whole scholastic rationalism which underlies the Catechism is a fashion of longer life — but still a fashion; the Faith can stand without it.

John Co 15/84

COMMENTARY

Propriety under Popocatepetl

Galen Strawson

Under the Volcano
Various cinemas

Considered in itself, John Huston's film *Under the Volcano* is unimpressive. Considered as a film of Malcolm Lowry's *churrigueresque*, flawed masterpiece it is bad – despite some decent photography and some perfectly good acting by Albert Finney as Geoffrey Firmin, the retired British Consul to Cuernavaca, Jacqueline Bisset as his divorced, returning wife Yvonne, and Anthony Andrews as his twenty-nine-year-old Marxizing brother Hugh.

The ways in which it is bad are more interesting than the ways in which it is unimpressive. Perhaps Huston's main error lies in his determination to peg out a firm plot, to highlight motive, finger significant details, and minimize obscurity and ambiguity. One result of this is that all the attempted *surreptitiousness* of the Consul's drinking is lost. Another is that his spasms of jealousy about Yvonne's close relations with Hugh are made highly noticeable. But they are much more powerfully presented in Lowry's novel, as brief, almost fortuitous and soon-forgotten interruptions of the scattered, circumfluent process of alcoholic self-absorption. It is true that Finney's Consul is a plausible drunk. But Lowry's Consul is an implausible drunk, and often an unobvious one. As Hugh says, "Half the time you can't tell when he's tight anyway."

So it is that in this film the great strength of Anglo-American cinema – the instinct for clear and well-made story – turns into a weakness. Lowry's vast, vague weave of alcoholic disjunction, illusion and irrelevance, of distorted association, nostalgic repetition and elusive allusion, is tidied up into a series of scenes: Yvonne's return to Cuernavaca in the early morning of the Mexican Day of the Dead, November 1938, to find the Consul holding

Spectacle and speculation

Roger Warren

The Canadian Shakespeare Festival
Stratford, Ontario

The outstanding event of this year's rather uneven season at Stratford, Ontario is a masterly production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* by John Hirsch, the festival's Artistic Director, who has a gift for seizing upon what is most important in a play and presenting this in the most vividly theatrical way. His starting-point is Titania's extended account of the chaos in the natural world which mirrors the chaotic relationships in the fairy kingdom and among the "human mortals". Desmond Heeley's beautiful designs transform the stark platform stage into a wood of tall, slender saplings; brown autumn leaves on these midsummer trees aptly suggest the confusion of the seasons which Titania describes.

The corresponding confusion between men and women is established in an extended opening battle fought by Theseus and his army of conquistadors against Hippolyta and her Amazons, a tension repeated in the fairy quarrel where Oberon's attendants menace Titania's with spears. Patricia Conolly's pale, sad, intense Titania is a development from her defeated Hippolyta, and Nicholas Pennell's sternly dominating Theseus grows into an Oberon of awesome authority.

Hirsch's approach intensifies the impact of the magnificent verse. Hippolyta's comparison of the moon to a "silver bow, new-bent in heaven" takes on a new immediacy in a context which emphasizes that she is an Amazonian queen; and Titania's account of the seasonal confusions is delivered with an exceptional urgency, as if her life depends upon it. When Pennell and Conolly reappear as Theseus and Hippolyta, their fresh green hunting robes, set against those brown leaves, and Pennell's pointing of Theseus's witty irony as he modifies his earlier severity towards the lovers, effectively capture the new mood of "gentle concord" which resolves the preceding tensions.

forth in an empty bar; their return to their house; the Consul's various matutinal flights in search of drink; the visit to the *fiesta* fair-ground; the bus ride to Tomalín; Hugh's performance in the bullring; and so on.

All this is in the book, but Lowry is not much of a storyteller, and the scenes he sets are merely colourful terms in which to express the terrible, facile romance of drink. The film dutifully recreates them, and it places a drunken Consul within them. But it fails to present them through the Consul's eyes. It respects Lowry's Tarot imagery, but it fails completely to convey any sense of what the Day of the Dead was like for the Consul. It fails to convey the ghastliness of his continual backsliding, the miserable drama of his perpetual akrasia, the incredible, self-aware squalor of his squabbling self. It gives no sense of the moments of perfection, of the routine hells of deprivation, of the special perceptions of beauty, of "the perils, the complications, yes, the importance of a drunkard's life" – of the subject of Lowry's book, in other words.

This is, admittedly, a difficult thing to do. But the Consul could have spent some time in the lavatory at the Salón Ofelia in Tomalín; and the violent cut-up juxtapositions and interruptions of scenes, images and voices that he experiences there could have been directly expressed on film. We could have been allowed to hear some of his insistent inner voices, "hissing and shrieking and yammering", some of the regular "familiars" who gabble in his ear as he sits silently with Yvonne and fails, as they gabble, to hear what she says. We could have been given some sense of the internal argument, the particular casuistic circuitry of alcoholic thought. ("How sensible to have had a mesal. How sensible!") The Consul's distorted perceptions are also a proper subject for film, as are his experiences of the "sinister and urgent and inflamed" minutiae of his surroundings, and of the "uncontrollable mystery of the bathroom floor". The *fiesta* fairground, and



"Spherical lava amid irregular prisms", an engraving from B. Faujas de Saint-Fond's *Essais de géologie, 1803-09*, reproduced in *Voyage into Substance: Art, science, nature, and the illustrated travel account, 1760-1840* by Barbara Maria Stafford (645pp, with 270 plates, MIT Press, £37.95, 0 262 192233).

the ill-famed Farolito bar in Paríán where the Consul finishes up are colourful, in Huston's version. But the Farolito is still too clean (Buñuel's Farolito would have been a more accurately sinister place). And the camera is stone cold sober. It moves like a disapproving tourist. It could have come in closer. It could have lost focus. It might have profited from being hand-held. It could have stumbled. The image could have fractured through a prism, when "suddenly matter was disjunct". The volcano Popocatepetl could have simply happened into view, serene or sinister, instead of being the subject of separate set sequences.

But Huston has flattened the whole thing out. His film is in far too much of a hurry, trying to get the details in. It creates no feeling

of slippage or drift, or of the illimitable extent of the last day of the Consul's life. The narrative conventions of film are such that one only has to dwell on a detail for a few extra seconds for the audience to sense a disproportion, an uneasiness, an improper stretching of time, potential obsessiveness. But Huston more cleanly and economically on, diluting and distancing. The way in which he changes the final scenes – Yvonne arrives at the Farolito where the Consul is closeted with his unidentified whore, and exits weeping, instead of being down the overgrown path to Paríán – is remarkably effective; but only as a way of distancing the power and tragedy of Lowry's conclusion.

other former members of this young company, Colm Feore and Seana McKenna, give striking performances in the title roles of Peter Derr's efficient *Romeo and Juliet* at the main house: its most original feature is a very subtle Lady Capulet from Patricia Conolly, apprehensively trying to save Juliet from the kind of forced marriage she herself has endured, but lacking the force of character to oppose her domineering husband.

The small size of the Third Stage considerably reduces the problems which actors face on the main stage. Leon Rubin encourages the cast of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* to adopt a staid, much more deliberate pace than they would dare risk in the big theatre, in order to make the verbal jokes very clear and the emotions real. Unlike the updating in *The Merchant and Love's Labour's Lost*, the modern dress in this production has a clear function. Rubin partly draws on the "sexually ambiguous" image of modern pop singers to get round difficulties like the outlaws, who here look like an aggressively ambidextrous rock group, choosing Valentine as their leader because he is "beautified with goodly shape"; but the modern fashions are chiefly used to suggest the adolescent emotional confusions of the lovers.

Julia and Proteus play their farewell scene in bed: their affair has gone so much further than in most productions at this point that even more than usual seems at stake when Proteus betrays her. After that harsh experience, she becomes hard-bitten and resentful, consistent with the society created by the production, less clear that he is not simply handing Silvia over to Proteus: here he says "all my love to Silvia, also give to thee". The two men embrace, watched in distrust by the girls. It becomes a dark ending, with no easy resolution. It does not entirely solve the problems of a difficult text, but like John Hirsch's *Dream*, it probes deeply into the play and makes one think afresh about it, as the other productions on the whole do not.

Of time, chance and indifference

Graham Bradshaw

LEOŠ JANÁČEK
Osud.
Coliseum

The ENO publicity claims that *Osud* is at last receiving its British premiere. That claim would be dismissed if Janáček's score had been rearranged for brass band, but few will be troubled by the fact that what takes place on the Coliseum stage bears so little relation to the carefully considered, precisely stated intentions of one of the greatest modern dramatists.

Janáček's own failure to secure a staged performance is usually attributed to the shortcomings of Bartoň's mawkishly poetic, "Pushkinian" libretto; but Bartoň's was merely verifying Janáček's own exceedingly specific and detailed scenario, and her libretto is more complex but no more excessively "poetic" than, say, the text of Janáček's cantata *Amarus*. Poetic fashions change, but it seems clear, at least in retrospect, that what so perplexed and dismayed even Janáček's friends and early champions, like Max Brod and Jaroslav Vogel, were those elements in *Osud* which now seem most modern and prophetic: in particular, the deliberately shocking, existential "absurdity" of Mila's death, and the correspondingly self-conscious way in which *Osud* (like Smetana's *The Devil's Wall*) both utilizes and subverts romantic conventions.

Its elaborate cross-references, internal parodies and dissonant juxtapositions all accentuate that dilemma which tortures the composer-protagonist, Živný, as he struggles to complete an opera which will make sense of life – his life – in art. On the one hand he wants to see, and depict, his reunion with Mila as an expression of "fate" or "destiny", which presupposes a

meaningful universe; on the other, he is brought – above all, by the grotesque contingency of Mila's death – to a terrifying sense of life as an implacably surging, Schopenhauerian process which cannot support human notions of meaning and value. In each act he is "corrected" by life itself, but cannot translate his struggling intuitions into an opera that will seem anything other than "funny and strange". "divné to a směšné": his own baffled verdict in Act Two is unwittingly echoed by the students in Act Three. Like Wordsworth's "spots of time" or T.S. Eliot's redeeming "moments", Živný's conception of "fate" represents an attempt to endow life with the significance the artist then claims to discover. But Janáček explores this fundamental romantic dilemma by ensuring that Živný's conception is exposed to the workings of time and chance; to the mother's vicious parodies (for her, Živný is merely a "vile seducer" and transgressor of social morality); to the incomprehension and indifference of a society which lives at a lower, less demanding level; and to Živný's own agonized suspicion that "they" were "right", that it is all mere "chance". At the end of *Osud* the broken artist is helped off stage by the kindly, uncomprehending Dr Suda; in David Pountney's no less uncomprehending production this last scene is simply excised, and replaced by a stupid piece of interpolated "business".

Janáček provided very specific stage directions for the first act, which takes place in the spa at Luhačovice; for the director who is concerned to serve the drama, not use it as a springboard for his own self-regarding extravagance, there are two important challenges. The first is to achieve the right balance between verismo detail and expressionistic "heightening". Janáček specifies various realistic and picturesque details – including a "fantastic music pavilion" and "the Amantka well", a

strength is a sham. When he teasingly fights Rodolpho (who has no desire to fight him) it is evident that, did he so wish, Rodolpho could knock Eddie into the middle of next week. So obvious is it that Eddie is not of the stuff that tragic heroes are made of that Miller, in expanding the original (and much better) one-act version of 1955, felt compelled to introduce a lawyer who, at the end, like a Greek chorus, assures us that Eddie was a really fine fellow after all. This part is well played by David Hargreaves.

In 1956 everything of the tragic hero that Miller had failed to put into Eddie was compensated for by a wonderful performance by Anthony Quayle. In Quayle was the great strength, the towering personality, the genuine incomprehension which at the Young Vic Malcolm Tierney does not give us. Miller himself, in an interesting programme note, admits this. Of Quayle he exclaims, "Brilliant. Magnificent! He was no pipsqueak longshoreman. It made your hair stand on end." And surprisingly he didn't like it. The accent was too U. For apparently a "pipsqueak longshoreman" was what he wanted, Miller in this play was not writing from the conventional academic standpoint. He did want to present us with a king disguised as a longshoreman. He wanted a longshoreman, speaking Brooklynes.

This is precisely what the Young Vic gives him. The accent of Brooklyn in Roger Smith's production is presumably authentic, and naturalistic authenticity seems to be something that Miller rates highly. Shelagh Keegan's setting of a shabby kitchen and living-room, shadowed by the vast bulk of the sinister Brooklyn Bridge, is remarkable. Nevertheless *A View from the Bridge* can only be reconciled with the generally accepted Aristotelian conception of tragedy if we consider that what Aristotle demanded was not character but, as John Jones has argued, action or plot, the real constituent of tragedy being not the presence of the tragic hero, but the occurrence of a change of fortune. At the Young Vic there is a change of fortune; it coincides with the arrival of Rodolpho. I think we must give the production the benefit of the doubt and agree that *A View from the Bridge* is a tragedy after all.

A common verdict on this production is that it is not. The prevailing view of tragedy is that there is in it a tragic hero who is destroyed by some flaw in his character. Now there are flaws in Eddie, but where can we find anything in him of the hero? He destroys his wife's happiness; he betrays his fellow-Italians; he has no wonder of speech; he is in perpetual ill-temper. Even his "obstinate" physical

colonnade "roofed with airy blue glass", and yellow paths leading through the park; but he also treats the passage of time (from early morning to dusk in one short act) and the spa set's secular worship of the sun in a deliberately heightened, unrealistic fashion. Pountney, who is evidently not troubled by questions involving the identity of a work of art, thought it better to have a set consisting of vast polythene shower curtains, with a grand piano at the centre of an intolerably noisy revolving stage.

And instead of Janáček's very varied spa set – which should include Bohemian artists, clerks, teachers, priests, an old Slovak lady, a toddler, and some unvirginal schoolgirls – we have a largely undifferentiated crowd dressed in white; in short, a theatrical effect, or coup, of the kind so much admired by those who are indifferent to drama. This defuses Janáček's second challenge, which is to open up a *Tonio Kröger*-like contrast between life as it is ordinarily lived, and enjoyed, and the anguished, self-absorbed inner realms of creativity, passion and memory. In Janáček's music drama, though not in this production, there is a critical and interrogative contrast between the spa set's robust and healthy, but shallow and unreflective "normality" – which Janáček neither satirizes nor condemns – and the lovers' passionate rejection of the "spider's web" of ordinary existence, Živný's demand for spiritual revelation, and the vulnerably romantic wish "to live our love, to live in dreams".

The wonderful music which opens the second act is all but drowned by the noise of the revolving stage; Janáček's stage directions – that is, his dramatic conception – is again ignored. There is nothing to indicate Živný's increased prosperity as a teacher, and of course there is no sign of the potted palm by the piano – a nice, curiously Ibsenian detail through which Janáček passed a sly comment on what

An inveterate arranger

Anthony Hobson

The Douce Legacy
Bodleian Library, Oxford, until October 27

The collecting career of the Bodleian Library's greatest benefactor, Francis Douce (1757-1834), makes an interesting contrast with that of his near-contemporary, William Beckford. Both started young – Douce bought his first medieval manuscript at the age of eighteen – and continued to make acquisitions till the end of their lives. Both followed their own predilections and avoided the fashionable subjects of the time: first editions of the classics, Shakespeare quartos and early printing – though Douce managed to accumulate six Caxtons, Douce shared a taste for cookery and demonology, the Roman liturgy and the exotic; both owned albums of Chinese paintings from the Van Braam sale; both admired William Blake, both visited, and bought books in, Paris during the Revolution and again after Waterloo, both collected works of art as well as books.

Douce, it is true, did not share Beckford's interest in travel, but Beckford would not have been indifferent to many of Douce's specialities: the Danes of Death, the medieval collection of tales known as the *Gesta Romanorum*, fools and folly, emblem books, lacemaking, calligraphy. But here the resemblance ends. Beckford was a member of the landed gentry and heir to a great fortune. Douce belonged to the urban professional classes and was obliged to earn his living as an attorney – an occupation which he found "exceedingly tedious" – until the inheritance of a comfortable sinecure released him. It was only in 1827, when he obtained possession of a legacy from the sculptor Nolkeus, that he could afford to buy more freely.

As collectors, the two are distinguished by one major difference: Beckford, however talented and versatile, was a dilettante, while Douce was a true scholar. Douce published works on various antiquarian subjects – his *Illustrations of Shakespeare* is still considered useful – and made a serious study of French and English romances, and of the history of book-collecting.

four years' marriage had made of the first act's sun and of the inner flames of a baffled creativity. Mila's death is hopelessly bungled: there is a walkabout through the shower curtains, until the revolving stage brings on two corpses.

Osud has still to receive its premiere. If the Scottish or Welsh National Opera will stage it, I hope they will re-emphasize Philip Langridge, who is excellent as Živný, and that the orchestra will spend more time rehearsing. When the work is properly staged, audiences will be in a position to see how it provides the bridge between *Jenůfa* and the great operas which were to follow. After the death of his beloved Olga and the ensuing collapse of his marriage, there was a decisive shift in Janáček's creative and dramatic preoccupations. *Osud* marks the break with "folk" opera; its troubled, ambivalent concern with the nature of Nature looks forward to the *Věrní*; its concern with the relations between art and life – and with the fact that art counts for so little in most lives – looks forward to *Makropulos* and to the ironic quizzing of a bourgeois and materialistic society in *Druček*; the extraordinary choruses in the third act were only surpassed years later, when Janáček composed *From the House of the Dead*. It shows the magnificently assured composer of "national" opera transforming himself into an international and wholly contemporary dramatist. It deserves to be staged.

Opera North's autumn season includes new productions, by Steven Pimlott, of *Cavalleria Rusticana* and *I Pagliacci* and the British premiere of Ernst Klenek's *Johnny Strikes Up* (1927) – one of the first operas to employ jazz and ragtime. It will be given in English, in a production by Anthony Besch, conducted by David Lloyd-Jones. There will be performances in Leeds, Manchester, Nottingham, Newcastle and London (Sadler's Wells).

texts. He was generous with the loan of manuscripts to other scholars, even on one occasion lending his Provençal *chansonnier* to an expert in Paris. An inveterate arranger and compiler of lists, he was led by this habit into an unfortunate practice of cutting miniatures from his own manuscripts and pasting them in albums. (Most have now been replaced.)

What the current exhibition at the Bodleian strikingly reveals is the quality of the books Douce succeeded in buying. Even in a period offering exceptional opportunities, his copy of the *Jenson Pliny*, illuminated by Monte di Giovanni for Filippo Strozzi, his *Tuppo Aesop*, with its fine woodcuts, his *Sammelband* of Dürer's engraved work in a contemporary Nuremberg binding, his Venetian portulan and his unique metalcut of "A Turk and his Wife" were outstanding.

The manuscripts illustrate a period of transition, that has been studied by A.N.L. Munby, between Augustan revulsion from gothic miniatures as "barbaric" to Victorian adulation of them. Like every good eighteenth-century connoisseur Douce admired the late Italian and Flemish styles, buying a cutting which he optimistically believed to be "an undoubted miniature by Jul. Clovio" and regarding as his finest example of illumination a *Horne* by one of the artists of the *Grimani Breviary*. But other manuscripts in his collection would have delighted William Morris: the Anglo-Saxon *Crowland Psalter*, the East Anglian *Ormesby Psalter* and the beautiful *Apocalypse* illuminated for Edward I and Eleanor of Castile. The late seventh or early eighth-century *Primatius super Apocalypsim* cost Douce £2 9s in 1801. "Not a tenth part of its value", he noted triumphantly. Modern scholarship has confirmed this opinion. The *capitula* are now thought to have been written by St Boniface, while later notes may be in the hand of St Dunstan.

An admirably full and informative catalogue (*The Douce Legacy*, 188pp, Bodleian Library, Oxford, £5 at the exhibition, £10 otherwise, 0 900177 96 9) has been issued of this exhibition, which introduces the visitor to an eccentric but remarkable Englishman, besides illuminating a heroic period in the history of book-collecting.

The text reconceived

Tom Davis

JEROME J. MCGANN
A Critique of Modern Textual Criticism
146pp. University of Chicago Press. £10.65.
0226 558517

The problem with textual critics is that they produce their editions, which normally involve years of very exacting labour, to a precise set of specifications laid down by those who buy them. Unfortunately, this transaction takes place at an unconscious, or ideological, level, so that the literary critics believe that they are buying, and requiring, Truth, and the textual critics, unfortunately for their peace of mind, are therefore put to believing that they must produce it. Traditional literary criticism cannot function unless it can operate upon a text that appears to emanate directly, without intermediaries, from the author, each particle uniquely and irreplaceably appropriate, *authorized*, as if the text sprang into perfect being in a moment, as God created and authorized the world.

A little reflection (or the experience of editing a text) would lead one quite quickly to the realization that this is not how authors behave, but unfortunately this is the rather limited theory of literary production under which textual critics are forced to labour. It is not, in fact, a theory most literary critics would dream of avowing in their own practice (such is the time-lag between ideology and analysis): critical articles that claim to attempt to reproduce the author's final intention with regard to his or her text are not particularly thick on the ground, in spite of the endeavours of E.D. Hirsch. But that is the claim prefaced to all scholarly editions almost without exception.

The problem, then, is that the theory of textual criticism is constantly beset, from the practice, with exceptions that falsify it. Jerome McGann has made a collection of these exceptions, from which I offer two. Byron produced

a number of versions of *The Giaour*, the most significant of which are: the holograph draft (344 lines); the fair copy (375 lines); the trial proof (453 lines); edition 1 (684 lines); 2 (816 lines); 3, 1st issue (950 lines); 2nd issue (1,014 lines); 4 (1,048 lines); 5 (1,215 lines); and 7 (1,334 lines). Byron corrected press for the first, third, fifth and seventh editions; and the versions were restyled completely in the third, fifth, seventh and thirteenth editions. Authors, unlike God, are allowed to have second thoughts about creation, but it sounds a little silly to suppose that one of these versions is the "real" one. This situation, observes McGann, is typical of the textual situation of Byron's earlier works. W. H. Auden's practice was odd in a different way: he was, apparently, particularly sensitive to the opportunities which context provided, so that after 1939 he would place poems in new contexts and thus produce new "networks of meaning". Thus the prose piece "Depravity: a Sermon", which in *The Dog Beneath the Skin* (1935) is an ironic anti-religious parody, in the 1945 *Collected Poetry* is "so placed that one is forced to read it as a serious religious tract". And so on.

The problems in fact are twofold: very often authors will either leave us with a number of versions, without adequately indicating which is the "real" one, or they will dissipate and confuse their Authority by collaborating - with friends, scribes, spouses, compositors, or complete strangers. Both of these classes offer numerous refuting instances for the monothemism inherent in textual criticism.

Unfortunately it is not enough to multiply refuting instances in order to dethrone a theory. There are two techniques available to protect it, as Imre Lakatos has classically observed. One is to tinker with and stretch the theory until it (more or less) fits the new data; the other is to say that the new instance is so unusual and bizarre that it can be classified as a monster, and therefore ignored. So: McGann's collection of monsters is only the latest (and among the most able) in a long line of such

collections; but although monsters proliferate, and holes keep appearing in the theory (such that, unlike the little Dutch boy, the theorists of textual criticism seem to be in danger out of 'thumbs') the output of scholarly editions continues unabated.

The reason for this is that those who have invested a great deal of time and labour in a theory are unlikely to abandon it even if it dies under them unless, that is, a new theory becomes available for them to progress to, that will contain the explanatory power of the old theory but also satisfy the problems posed by the refuting instances. Even then, one might add, adherents to the previous theory tend to have to die of old age before the new model gains widespread acceptance. The merit of the book under review is that it is aware of this, and that although its collection of monsters is impressive, it seeks also to point a way out of the zoo. But only in a very preliminary and oblique fashion. "This book is . . . an introduction to a new model for textual criticism . . . ; though I think such a work is necessary, I do not see that anyone is ready yet to produce it. Too much innovative and exploratory work is being done at the moment in all the relevant fields; attempting a synthesis at this time would be premature." Textual criticism is in the process of reconceiving its discipline, and this book's aim is to clarify those central issues which have emerged during the last ten years or so.

Intimacy regained

Chris Norris

STEVEN UNGAR
Roland Barthes: The professor of desire
206pp. University of Nebraska Press.
08032 45513

Steven Ungar starts out in somewhat pedestrian fashion, describing the intellectual context of Barthes's early writings (Marxism, structuralism, the Sartrean connection) and offering summary accounts of the major texts. Then there is a marked quickening of interest, as Barthes turns aside from his "scientific" projects and comes to embrace what Ungar regards as his true writerly vocation. This change of heart is presented in almost Kierkegaardian terms. Barthes begins as a willing thrall to the structuralist mystique of system and method, looking to Saussure for a full-blown theory of language and cultural representations. Only by essaying the limits of this rationalist dream will his writing discover a sense of its authentic (Ungar would say ethical) destiny. The Barthes who emerges from these visions and revisions is a chastened positivist who henceforth devotes himself to reclaiming the subjective in language, that which escapes the paternal law of typecast structuralist method.

Ungar's book cannot really deliver what it promises at one point: a "synthesis or overview based on what is now a complete chronology". Rather, it traces a "broken and reactive movement" (his own much apter description) whereby the early texts are progressively distanced and called into question by Barthes's more elusive later productions. That Ungar's style reflects this pattern of increasing self-involvement - to the point, indeed, of erasing any firm distinction between text and commentary - merely underlines the message. As Barthes came to believe, there is no meta-language: no means of distinguishing "literary" texts from the various competing discourses which claim to comprehend them. "Theory" is thus deluded if it thinks to achieve a standpoint outside the ubiquitous play of textual figuration. Thus we move, in Ungar's reading, from the prison-house of concepts to a zone of intimate motives and desires where language inhabits a realm unknown to the partisans of structuralist method.

This idea finds various privileged contexts and metaphors in Barthes's later writing. It figures most expressly in those texts (like *A Lover's Discourse*) where "commentary" is mingled with fictive and autobiographical themes in a constant subversive play of language and desire. What begins as a somewhat optional "erotic" of reading - a fixation with

As a forerunner McGann succeeds very well, and the book contains useful hints at the theory which may supplant the present one. It insists for instance on the Romantic origin of the model of the author outlined above, and uses throughout, instead of, say, "literary works of art", the interesting and suggestive phrase "national scriptures" - though, oddly, without elaboration. Hints towards a sociology of textual criticism (which is surely the way forward) are there, but do not bear fruit.

Well, perhaps one greater than McGann is waiting to slouch on to the scene; for whom, if this were so, this book would be a good introduction. Or perhaps not: may it not be that there can be no adequate theory of textual criticism, since the pursuit is simply a service industry for literary criticism, and thus forced to cope with monsters not of its own making? It may be salutary for those of us who edit texts (we are not notorious for our modesty) to think of ourselves, not as free and independent inquirers after the truth, but more in the position of George Orwell's *Ampleforth*, whose task is to adjust texts to the ideological requirements of the Big Brother of literary criticism?

A few cubicles away a mild, ineffectual, dreamy creature named *Ampleforth*, with very hairy ears and a surprising talent for juggling with rhymes and metres, was engaged in producing garbled reworded texts, they were called - of poems which had become ideologically offensive.

textual *jouissance* and its polymorphous variants - becomes at the last a strong reaction of "individual values" (Ungar's phrase) against the pressures of conformist method. And this leads in turn to the seminar-group as an ideal projection of the intimate relationship that Barthes now seeks between writer and reader, teacher and student. The discourse of truth gives way to a language of embodied desires and intentions. "I talk a lot about sex - perhaps too much - but no soul have I seen that did not come in a body, and what teach somebody I teach some body."

Ungar is quite clear about the political choices involved in his way of recounting Barthes's career. He is frankly unimpressed with the *marxist* brand of applied semantics which thinks to undermine "bourgeois" mythology from a higher dialectical standpoint. Thus he welcomes the turn toward ethical individualism which substitutes a close-knit "community of friends" for the anonymous collective of class-history. Barthes's later writings are sure to frustrate those "who prefer the pleasures of ideology to the ideologies of pleasure". If it is hard to construe the logic of this sentence - just how those genitals are meant to work out - the confusion is reproduced elsewhere in various forms. What Barthes learned from Sartre's "experience", according to Ungar, was that intellectuals "cannot and should not speak for others". Thus "the challenge for those who are relatively unoppressed is to speak only for themselves". Ungar treats Barthes as a one-time ideologue stumbling toward the light of ethical individualism. That defensive phrase about the "relatively unoppressed" is a way of keeping politics vaguely in view while preserving the authentically human as the locus of ultimate value.

Ungar's book makes no secret of its desire to talk Barthes down from the giddy heights of theory and lead him back into the ready-made fold. Ungar sees this as a radical enterprise, a promise ("however tentative, idealist and disarming") that society may yet be transformed through the agencies of language, desire and interpersonal relation. Such claims are clearly open to a sceptical reading which would question their ideological investment in a culture only too willing to sanction that shift from "political" to "private" myths of concern. At least the book has the virtue of acknowledging its own - inevitably partial - motives and interests.

In a paperback reissue of *Narcissistic Narratives: The metafictional paradox* (1983p. Methuen: £4.50, 0 416 37140 X) Linda Hutcheon analyses the techniques of self-referential fiction and its implications for the theory of the novel.

Upwards to the absolute

Roger Scruton

M. J. INWOOD
Hegel
382pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul. £24.
07100 95090
ROBERT C. SOLOMON
In the Spirit of Hegel
646pp. Oxford University Press. £25.
019 503169 5
H. S. HARRIS
Hegel's Development: Volume 2, Night Thoughts (Jena 1801-1806)
627pp. Oxford University Press. £35.
019 824654 4

In recent years analytical philosophers have become increasingly self-conscious about their isolation from the mainstream of European culture. Their attempts to join hands with their contemporaries usually begin from a study of Hegel, who is now as much the subject of analytical commentary as is Kant or Wittgenstein. The task these philosophers have set themselves is, however, extremely hazardous. Hegel's philosophy is like a beautiful oasis around a treacherous pool of nonsense, and nowhere beneath the foliage is the ground really firm. The analytical commentator, stepping from the desert lands of logic on to this slimy surface, may immediately recoil, and thereafter do no more than touch it gingerly at the perimeter with the tip of an outstretched toe. Alternatively, he may step out boldly. Unable, however, to swing through the trees like Bradley and McTaggart (last survivors of a race of long-armed hominids), he then begins to skid ominously towards the slough of meaninglessness around which Hegel's philosophy grows, and from which it seems to take such inexplicable vitality.

As yet no analytical philosopher has been able to find a path of *terra firma* through this jungle. Charles Taylor, in the fullest and most impressive of recent commentaries (*Hegel, 1975*), succeeds in smashing his way through the Hegelian system only by constantly throwing himself forward into the swamp, and resolutely ignoring the steady change in his own appearance. The Charles Taylor who emerges from this experience is not the Charles Taylor who embarked on it. In particular, it cannot be said that his attachment to analytical philosophy has survived. Having failed to step on *terra firma* he rejects the normal use of his feet, reaching his destination instead by a process of creative stumbling, following a path which no observer can trace. What every analytical philosopher was looking for - the safe map of the Hegelian territory - is still not available, and while Taylor's reports of the wondrous flora surprise and tantalize his readers, his staring eyes and mud-bespattered features give little confidence that we could ever arrive - were we to enter the swamp behind him - at the same destination. To show us an argument, which leads by logical steps from truth to truth, and which ends at last at one of Hegel's ripe conclusions - *hoc opus, hic labor est*.

Naturally, therefore, every analytical philosopher will be interested to find a volume dedicated to Hegel in the so far extremely successful series of commentaries composed by members of the Anglo-Saxon establishment, and dedicated to "The Arguments of the Philosophers". Is this the long-awaited chart of Hegel? If it is, then we should forgive M. J. Inwood, the otherwise inexcusable breach of wise editorial policy, that the commentaries should be short enough to justify the time taken to read them - time which might otherwise be spent with the philosophers themselves.

Unfortunately, after struggling with Inwood's commentary for several tortured days, I was forced to conclude that it is largely useless. Your average philosopher, asked to name the most important of Hegel's "arguments", would probably refer to the passage in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* describing the conflict between master and slave. Here, in a few terse, beautiful pages, Hegel seems to condense an entire vision of man's social condition, and to promise an answer to some of the most important questions of moral and political philosophy. Theories of freedom, of law, of institutions of personal existence - all are suggested in a passage which has influenced every serious moral and political thinker who has

made the effort to study it. My greatest shock on reading Inwood's book - containing 550 pages ostensibly devoted to Hegel's "arguments" - was to find that this famous argument is not once so much as mentioned.

The path that Inwood traces is a long irrelative meander on the desert fringes of the system, lacking the only virtue which it could conceivably possess - that of tracing the full circumference of the danger. Hegel's achievement as a philosopher lies not in his logic - which, for all its influence, deserves Russell's judgment, that the worse your logic, the more interesting its results - but in his profound description of man's spiritual condition. Philosophers ought to study Hegel not for his logic, but in spite of it. The important and lasting achievements of Hegel's system include the philosophy of the self, of its estrangement and restoration; the philosophy of the state (superior, in my view, to anything since Aristotle); the philosophy of art and culture (again without serious rival in the modern world); the brilliant re-creation of Christian theology, as an extended parable of man's spiritual pilgrimage. Only the last of these is considered by Inwood, and then in a desultory manner that ignores altogether the breathtaking moral perspective which Hegel opens to us, preferring to concentrate, instead, upon its flimsy frame of worm-eaten metaphysics.

Even as a guide to the logic and metaphysics, Inwood is at best erratic, staying constantly at a safe distance from thoughts which appear, in truth, scarcely to interest him. As he recognizes, "Hegel . . . hardly ever criticizes a proof in respect of its validity, but rather the conclusion it establishes." Nor is this surprising, for, with a few exceptions, the proofs given by Hegel are invalid, and anyone seriously concerned either to consign him to one dustheap or to rescue him from another, must concentrate on his conclusions, and endeavour to elicit in them a meaning that would both attract our interest, and also suggest how Hegel might have retained it, had he possessed the gift of logical argument. It seems that the method adopted by most sympathetic commentators has been the right one: namely to take Hegel's most important work, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, to show that it contains a lasting insight into the human condition, and thereafter to consider the logic as an attempt to justify this insight by generalizing it, so as to see in the workings of self-awareness the intimation of an order exhibited by being as a whole. If the "dialectic" is not thereby justified, at least it is made intelligible.

While one may respect Inwood's attempt to re-state the dialectic independently, and without Hegelian jargon, and to find in its principles of reasoning other than the impetuous idealism of Fichte or the self-serving rhetoric of Engels, the resulting picture is depressing in the extreme. Hegel appears in these pages as an enfeebled word-monger, seeking to base the most grandiose metaphysical claims on arguments which are seldom more than half-baked. Consider Hegel's "proof" that the statement "a plant is a plant", far from being logically true, is in fact a *contradiction*.

The beginning, "the plant is . . .", sets out to say something, to bring forth a further determination. But when it is just the same thing which returns, rather the opposite has happened, nothing has emerged. Such identical talk therefore contradicts itself.

To win over the reader to such reasoning is no easy task. The least that is required is a scrupulous explanation of the terms in which Hegel's "proofs" are couched.

I would suggest that the analytical commentator on Hegel must perform at least the following tasks: (1) He must point out that the term "logic" in Hegel is not used in the modern way. Rather, it is taken from the "Transcendental Logic" of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, where it means the study of the *a priori* conditions for the application of concepts: in other words, the basic moves in an anti-sceptical metaphysics. (2) He must explain the technical terms, which in the German frequently occur in inverted commas. Most important among these is the term "moment" - as in "moment of consciousness". (3) It is significant that Marx, though that he could make his theory of history intelligible to German readers by describing the stages of historical development as "moments". (4) He must show why Hegel

thinks that argument must begin from what is most "abstract", and advance, by a process of successive *Aufhebungen* to what is most "determinate", and show why he believes that the "abstract" is also "immediate" (*unmittelbar*).

Inwood does none of these things. His references to Kant are sparse and ill-informed. He postpones all serious discussions of the "temporal" character of Hegel's logic until page 433 (meanwhile allowing the term "moment" to feature unexplained in crucial quotations). He gives no glossary of terms, and in particular avoids the question why Hegel should have thought "the abstract" and "the immediate" to be co-extensive. Inwood's expositions seem hardly to progress beyond the postulate that, for Hegel, "truth" is a form of "comprehensiveness", the contradictions into which reasoning entices us being always resolved by ascending to a more comprehensive point of view. (Such is the *journey of "Spirit"* towards the absolute - a journey which never ends, since the "absolute" point of view is related only asymptotically to our reasoning.)

But how are we to understand that idea? There are occasions in the critical examination of a philosopher when a little history of ideas is beneficial. One of these occasions is the study of Hegel, who self-consciously related himself to his predecessors and left unexplained what they had already expounded. In understanding the dialectic, it seems to me, it is extremely important to study Kant's "Antinomies", and to recognize the relation between the Hegelian absolute, and the "unconditioned" point of view to which Pure Reason is supposed to aspire. It is also useful to study Fichte, and in particular Fichte's idea - everywhere assumed by Hegel - that knowledge arises through the "positing" (*setzen*) of its object, which then stands before the subject like a mirror. Inwood's only extended venture into the history of ideas consists in a peripheral discussion of Jacobi - an important influence, certainly, but one without the revolutionary power over German philosophical thinking that had been wielded by Fichte and Kant. The neglect of those philosophers partly explains why Inwood fails to interest the analytical reader in the dialectic. To present the dialectic as a mode of reasoning, which "approaches" the "truth" by an *Aufhebung*, and which makes only *a priori* assumptions, and only logically valid moves: to do this is merely to invite scepticism. For better or for worse, analytical philosophy has taught us that such things *cannot* be true. By returning Hegel to his sources in Fichte and Kant, however, one may discern deeper metaphysical questions which are still very much alive for us, and to which Hegel, for all his cavalier logic, provided interesting answers: Can we separate the world from our perspective upon it? Can the object of knowledge be understood independently of the subject? Where, in the world, is the subject? To all such questions Hegel gave answers which have been influential because they are also plausible.

It is fashionable to praise Hegel for having overturned (it would be more accurate to say, dismissed) the claims of epistemology, and replaced them with those of ontology (the theory of being). And Inwood repeats the praise. The true significance of this shift of focus is revealed, however, not in Hegel's metaphysics, but in his philosophy of mind, about which Inwood has little to say. Hegel recognized that the premise of traditional (Cartesian) epistemology is the immediate knowledge that I have of my "subjective" states. The content of immediate awareness, the Cartesian tells us, is "given": the rest must be deduced from it. But what does that mean? Under the influence of Fichte (and, more respectably, of Kant), Hegel argues that what is given to me *immediately* is precisely nothing. The immediacy of subjective awareness is an index of its emptiness. Nothing can be deduced from the content of immediate awareness - for it has no content. What I am aware of remains to be "determined", hence I cannot deduce, from the surface glow of immediate awareness, any substantial conclusions concerning myself: not even the conclusion that I exist as an individual.

Hegel's statement of the argument is characteristic. My first-person awareness is immediate, he argues, because it is *abstract* (and he supports this claim with some surprisingly modern reflections on the "indexicality" of

such terms as "I", "now", "here" and "this"). That, indeed, is the character of all immediate knowledge, which can gain its content only by a progressive removal of its abstraction, a progressive "determination", whereby its "immediacy" is "mediated", and so overcome.

This process, which, for the subject, is a process of self-understanding, is mirrored objectively, in the development of the individual person. I repeat in my thinking the destiny which made thinking possible. I owe my self-conscious existence to a process (a *Bildung*) which I also re-enact within myself, in all my attempts at self-discovery. Only a certain kind of being can have the "immediate awareness" from which epistemology begins. The task of philosophy is to deduce conclusions, not from the *content* of immediate awareness, but from the *fact* of it. What is given is not the object of immediate awareness, but the subject, and (to mimic Wittgenstein) to understand this given we must study the form of life in which it is created.

The great truth that Hegel dramatizes in all his philosophy can be glimpsed in that idea: the self is an artefact, dependent upon the process whereby it becomes an object of its own awareness (the process of *Selbstbestimmung*). The self is created in society, through our dialectical resolution of conflict, and our emergence into custom, morality, and civil association: these constitute the immovable "given" of the human condition, for without them there cannot be the self-conscious awareness that would enable us to question our existence. From such premises Hegel derives his masterly description of man's social essence, and of the inextricable ties which bind us to culture, institutions, morality and law. Nothing human is alien to this philosophy, since nothing human could be alien to it. Without the human element, however, the Hegelian ontology is an arid skeleton, loathsome in its suggestion of an evaporated life, a *memoria mori* lying beside the poisoned water-hole of dialectical abstraction. Such is the Hegel to whom Inwood eventually leads us.

Robert Solomon is in many ways the opposite of Inwood. He has already made his reputation as a populist, in the vein of Walter Kaufmann, concerned to restore the meaning to philosophy, and to return its frontiers to the territory that it has claimed. Solomon is well read, articulate, plausible, and accustomed to the positive approach. He takes us on an adventure into the Hegelian thicket, much as an American father would take his children on a camping holiday, well provided with the comforts of civilization, but with a didactic reverence for the wild. Solomon packs his equipment thoroughly. Nearly half the book is devoted to a survey of post-Kantian philosophy, of Hegel's development and self-opinion, and of the various important matters which we must bear in mind on our journey into the heart of darkness. Only at page 291 does the examination of Hegel's argument begin. Solomon then limits his attention almost entirely to the *Phenomenology*, upon which his book is a kind of homely commentary. He advances no further into Hegel's system than is reached down the only path that modern philosophers have trodden into relative firmness. We are set down in the little clearing made by the parable of the master and the slave, and there we are given a picnic of liberal platitudes.

Solomon's Hegel is a humanist, a progressive, even an atheist of sorts, the kind of guy who, had he enjoyed the benefits of an East Coast education, would now be a regular contributor to the *New York Review of Books*, and a stalwart lobbyist in the liberal interest. Occasionally, it is true, Solomon notices some dark shapes moving in the undergrowth, and, with touching solicitude, he announces the fact, in the tone of one who warns his children not to feed the bears. More often he directs our attention to this sunny tree-tops, to the great exposition of "positive freedom", and to the wondrous presumption which led Hegel to envisage the whole world as obedient to the inner imperatives which governed his soul.

Solomon's exposition of the master and slave argument is clear, serious, and to a certain extent convincing. But the book's claim to be a commentary on the *Phenomenology* as a whole must be discounted. The remainder of Hegel's argument is given scant and often rather feeble treatment, and the interpretation

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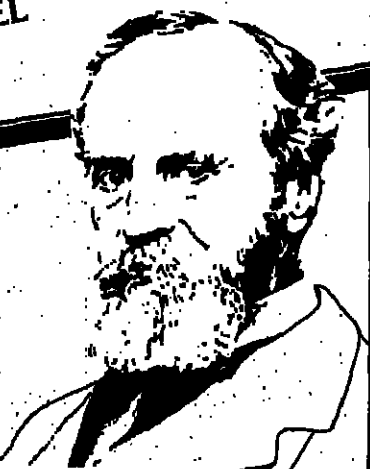
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is far from reliable. To take one example: Hegel's "beautiful soul" – usually thought to refer to the swooning preciosity of Novallis – is interpreted (not for the first time) as a portrait of Jesus. But did Jesus die – as, according to Hegel, the "beautiful soul" must die – of consumption? Nobody familiar with the Gospels could possibly see Jesus in this description:

[The] activity [of the "beautiful soul"] consists in yearning, which merely loses itself in becoming an unsubstantial shadowy object, and, rising above this loss and falling back on itself, finds itself merely as lost. . . its light dims and dies within it, and it vanishes as a shapeless vapour dissolving into thin air.

Solomon's interpretation is part of a spirited, but rather philistine, attempt to represent Hegel's theology as nothing more than a metaphor, behind which a humanist atheism lies concealed. In supporting this interpretation Solomon presents a caricature of theology, and also of religious belief itself, which appears in his pages as mere superstition. Whether or not one accepts Hegel's theology, it is clear that he was a Christian. He also gave the deepest available exposition of the doctrine of the incarnation, and showed that if one is to believe in God, one must believe in incarnation too.

Solomon's writing is consciously laid back. He promises a popular Hegel, for daily use; and to this end, provides a welcome glossary of Hegelian terms. However, his reluctance to pursue any argument beyond the point at which his favoured interpretation expires, curtails the discussion of underlying issues. Solomon's

opposition to the "reactionary" Hegel causes him to dismiss the defence of the family as little better than a rationalization of local, and superseded, social arrangements. In fact, however, Hegel's discussion of the family (extended further in *The Philosophy of Right*), provides one of the cornerstones of his philosophy. He defends, not the particular structure of the "bourgeois family", but relations of "natural piety" (to use Wordsworth's phrase) in general. "Piety" denotes the unchosen obligation upon which social reality is founded. It is from this "immediate" attachment that the human soul sets forth on its journey towards the free association of "civil society", and to which it is restored, in fully "realized", "determinate" and self-knowing, form, in the bond of political obligation.

That movement – from immediate immersion in experience, through separation and estrangement, back to a self-conscious acceptance of a new and comprehended unity – is the basic movement of the Hegelian dialectic. Solomon perceives as much. At the same time he could never accept the political philosophy which Hegel here derives from it. The very idea of an obligation of piety – an obligation that is not freely chosen – is anathema to the liberal conscience. And to make of such obligations (however self-conscious) the foundation of our allegiance to the State is to alienate the progressive reader. Yet Hegel's reasoning is here at its most powerful. He provides, I believe, the true reason why "social contract" theories cannot provide the ground of political

obligation. As a backwoods liberal, Solomon refuses to acknowledge Hegel's meaning. But that only serves to discredit his favoured interpretation. Rather than cherish the image of Hegel as a liberal humanist, he would have done better, to contemplate the meaning of such passages as the following:

Woman – the eternal irony in the heart of the community – changes by intrigue the universal end of government into a private end, transforms its universal activity into the work of a specific individual, and perverts the universal property of the State into a possession and ornament for the family. Thus she turns to ridicule the grave wisdom of maturity, which, being dead to mere particulars (pleasure, satisfaction and activity), attends only to what is universal; she makes this wisdom a laughing stock before the malice of wanton youth, as something unworthy of their enthusiasm. She holds up as principally valuable the strength of youth, – of the son, as lord of the mother who bore him, of the brother as the man who is equal to the sister, of the youth, through whom the daughter is freed from dependence, so as to find the satisfaction and dignity of widowhood.

Although Solomon's style is more agreeable than Inwood's its long-term effect is somewhat deadening. What claims to be vitality is really a kind of jauntiness, and Solomon's much-travelled intellect has acquired a kind of guide-book patter whose cumulative effect is heavy and wearisome. Returning to the *Phenomenology* I was struck by the contrast. Hegel's prose is clear, mobile, propelled by an abundance of life. A student who learns to ignore its presence at logic will gain more from reading it than from reading any of the commentaries. Both Inwood and Solomon tell us, however, that the *Phenomenology* was rapidly composed; and this, according to Solomon, is the explanation of its disorganized form and ill-written style. In opposition, I would suggest that there is no work of Hegel's that is better written than the *Phenomenology*, and that it shows the most

meticulous attention to both structure and content.

Such a suggestion is born out by H. S. Harris, in the second volume of his prodigious intellectual biography, which deals with the years in Jena preceding the writing of the *Phenomenology*. Harris's first sentence is the most disheartening in the whole book: "At midnight on 31 December 1800 the eighteenth century of the Christian era ended and the nineteenth dawned." Had he said "at 10.45 pm" or "December 30th" the reader would have anxiously read on. As it is, one's first inclination is to close the book, imagining it to be from the same stable as Leon Edel's biography of Henry James. However, once past the hurdle of the first sentence, everything changes. Harris's lengthy examination of five years of Hegel's life is justified by his sensible conviction that Hegel's life is in his writings, and that the interesting thing about the writings is what they mean. Harris therefore sets out on an extended examination of the Jena texts, many of which remain without commentary.

The result is extremely illuminating. Here judiciously expounded by a writer with a real philosophical intellect, a deep sympathy for Hegel, and a formidable gift of scholarship – are all the conceptions of the *Phenomenology*. From Harris's study we learn that the material of the *Phenomenology*, far from being hastily thrown together in response to a publisher's demand, had been repeatedly worked over, during five years of intense creative labour. To see the *Phenomenology*, not as the hasty effusion of a young man new to lengthy speculation, but as the inspired summary of patient investigations, is to recognize the indisputable claim of this work to be the most important text of nineteenth-century philosophy, and one that has yet to be provided with the commentary that it deserves.

More or less free

Kathleen Lennon

ILHAM DILMAN
Freud and the Mind
204pp. Oxford: Blackwell. £15.
0631 135294

Freud and the Mind consists of reflections, suggested by a reading of Freud, on the nature of self-knowledge, freedom and autonomy, though not explicated to provide a worked-out thesis. To criticize the book on this account, would, I suspect, be considered by Ilham Dilman to have missed the point. He regards Freud as mistaken in believing himself to have presented a hypothesis with his introduction of the concept of the unconscious, and suggests instead that Freud extended a certain mode of understanding, a form of conceptualization (in terms of meaning and purpose), to phenomena to which it had not previously been applied. In a parallel way Dilman seems to regard philosophy as providing suggestive description rather than theories or theses.

Dilman rejects Freud's causal or mechanistic view of his work, claiming instead that the explanatory order which results from his descriptions is of a non-causal nature, drawing attention to meaning or significance in certain events, such as dreams, apparently unintentional behaviour, etc. But what is involved in such perception of meaningfulness is not explored, nor are arguments against a causal view of its explanatory force given. Dilman claims that because Freud was wrong in thinking his explanations were causal, he was also wrong in thinking they ruled out the possibility of free will. Dilman's own discussion of freedom of action is interesting when it side-steps the issue of determinism and regards the freedom with which we act as a matter of degree, a function of the extent to which we are "at one with" the decisions we make. He contrasts interestingly one who acts as a consequence of a perception of a moral imperative, who might say that she could not have acted differently, with someone acting from a compulsion. The way someone "is compelled by his compassion is diametrically opposed to the way someone may be compelled by his rage to strike a man or by something that attracts him irresistibly". In the first case we have a paradigm of a free action; in the

second one which is not free. But the metaphors of "identifying with", "being behind" what we do, distinctive for Dilman of the free agent, are never cashed. Nor is the person who acts weakly distinguished from the compulsive agent. Here, as elsewhere in the book, Dilman's account suffers from a lack of attention to the nature and structure of practical reasoning, and a failure to indicate which of the agent's motivations can legitimately be regarded as an expression of herself.

These gaps are felt again in the account of the relation between the ego, the super-ego and the id. It is not clear why an agent's self and thereby her freedom and autonomy should be especially associated with motivations which are available to the ego; and criteria for deciding which motivations are part of the ego are not provided. Clearly though, both questions relate to the fact that certain motivations can be consciously articulated, evaluated and related to others. "Thought . . . is the prerogative of Freud's ego." Actions governed by unconscious intentions are not free, because the agent cannot assess them against others. Here, again, attention to practical reasoning is needed, and, connectedly, some exposition of what it is for an agent to make certain motivations her own.

The most interesting sections of this book are concerned with the nature of self-knowledge, in which Dilman argues that its development is not simply a matter of gaining new beliefs about ourselves. The process of making the unconscious conscious requires not only a change in our belief states but also a change in our will. To become aware of unconscious motivations brings them into play with conscious intentions and desires, demanding a new assessment and resolution; moreover the possibility of bringing them to consciousness requires, abandoning strategies we have previously adopted for keeping them hidden. Self-knowledge, according to Dilman, is not simply a matter of uncovering what is present, but covered; it also requires discovery in a creative sense. Practical wisdom (though he doesn't refer to it as such) requires self-knowledge of both kinds: it "involves the integration of dissociated aspects of the self and the taking on board of what is new". It is Dilman's overall view, I believe, that agents are most free when they act out of such self-knowledge.

Local and other motions

John Cottingham

JOHN W. YOLTON
Thinking Matter: Materialism in eighteenth-century Britain
238pp. Oxford: Blackwell. £19.50.
0631 133356
JOHN DUNN
Locke
97pp. Oxford University Press. £7.95
(paperback, £1.95).
019 2875612
G. MACDONALD ROSS
Leibniz
121pp. Oxford University Press. £7.95
(paperback, £1.95).
019 287621 X

Even if Descartes had written nothing about the nature of the mind, it seems that his refusal to allow anything in matter beyond "divisions, shapes and motions" would already have provided something of an obstacle to any physicalist account of thinking. In the words of Ralph Cudworth, in *The True Intellectual System of the Universe* (1678), "The Action of an Extended Thing as such, is nothing but *Cogitation* (*Phancy, Intellection and Volition*) are no *Local Motions*; nor the mere *Fridging up and down* of the Parts of an Extended Substance." The resolute anti-materialism of Cudworth is the starting point for John Yolton's richly detailed survey of eighteenth-century views of mind and matter in Britain; and the tone of the passage just quoted, with its curious mixture of philosophical argument and rhetorical bludgeoning, is typical of the extracts that enliven every page of this fascinating study.

Professor Yolton takes as his theme a "passing remark" of Locke that God might, if he so wished, "superadd to Matter a Faculty of thinking" (*Essay concerning Human Understanding* IV.iii.6). This idea, Locke suggests, is no more or less problematic than the (orthodox Cartesian) view that, in creating man, God has conjoined to matter a separate thinking substance. Yolton sets himself to show how Locke's suggestion "echoed down the years of the eighteenth century" as various writers struggled against vigorous opposition from immaterialists to "articulate the notion that to [sic] a suitably organised system of matter, thought might indeed be a property."

It should be observed that this last notion takes us much further than Locke. Locke himself, following Descartes, insisted that matter is, in and of itself, forever incapable of thought: "unthinking Particles of Matter, however put together; can have nothing thereby added to them but a new relation of Position, which 'tis impossible should ever give thought and knowledge to them" (*Essay*, IV.x.16). Locke's suggestion that an omnipotent God might "superadd" a faculty of thought to matter is surely weaker, and less materialistic in its implications, than the claim that thought is an emergent property of a physical system, or a function of matter "suitably organised". Nevertheless, Yolton is right to maintain that, simply by allowing the ascription of a thinking faculty to matter to be a logical possibility, Locke provided a "strong impetus towards materialism."

Yolton traces out three types of objection to "Locke's Suggestion" among eighteenth-century writers. The first is theological: the idea of thinking matter carried obviously damaging implications for the doctrine that the human soul is immortal because immaterial. The second is concerned with ethics: "thinking matter" was regarded as leading to the concept of the "automatized man", whereby our status as humans is reduced, in the words of Humphrey Ditton (1714), to that of "a Set of Moving spring Machines". The third source of opposition was a complex web of philosophical considerations centring around the Cartesian thesis that there can be no perceptions in an effect which were not previously present, in some form, in its cause (effectively, a denial of the possibility of genuine emergent properties). This type of Principle, as Yolton shows, played an important part in the attempts of writers like Samuel Clarke to prove *a priori* that "more blind matter could never give rise to Intelligence or consciousness."

In the central chapters of his study, Yolton charts the course of a slow and painful battle against the prevailing consensus on the limits of "mere matter". Interestingly, the impetus for the challenge did not come from physiology (which, of course, was still far from developing the electrical and chemical framework for modern neurology, and where the dominant paradigm was crudely mechanistic – nerves being pipes to conduct the flow of "animal spirits"). The important shift, Yolton argues, was in the concept of matter itself: the seventeenth-century view of matter as totally passive gave place to a concept of matter as essentially energetic and forceful. Joseph Priestley emerges as the key figure here: in his 1772 work on vision he rejects the older conception of matter as solid, impenetrable and inert (and therefore incapable of thought) in favour of a conception (derived from Bosovich) of matter as consisting of "physical points . . . surrounded with various spheres of attraction and repulsion". Armed with this conception, Priestley is able to put forward the modern-sounding thesis that thought "is a property of the nervous system, or rather of the brain".

There is perhaps a slight frustration by the end of the volume that Yolton's resolute policy of unfolding ideas rather than engaging with them has prevented us from sharing his own philosophical reactions to these developments. Occasionally there are hints that he regards Priestley's approach as representing a significant philosophical advance: "an active, dynamic matter . . . might have been seen as a proper subject for a plurality of kinds of predicates" (le both psychological and physiological). But would not Cudworth and his like have maintained that even complex configurations of points within spheres of attraction were still, at the end of the day, "mere fridging up and down"? There are philosophical issues at stake here which remain unresolved even today, and it is hardly a criticism of Yolton that he has declined to pronounce any verdicts. What he has given us is an absorbing and beautifully documented piece of intellectual history.

Despite the extreme slowness of the format, several of the Oxford *Past Masters* volumes (Kennedy on Aquinas, Scruton on Kant, to name but two) have managed to provide both stimulation and enlightenment. John Dunn's contribution provides some of both in the area of Locke's political and ethical thought – particularly in a vigorous and lucid analysis of Locke's theory of the right to property. But in the book as a whole there is a serious problem of balance. The heavy political emphasis, plus the fact that nearly a quarter of the volume is devoted to the introductory biographical chapter, mean that little space is left for Locke's theory of knowledge. Worse, the space that does remain is sometimes squandered. No student, nor anyone else, wants or needs to be told that "it remains an open question whether [our views on knowledge] would benefit from, for example, owing more to a better understood Locke, or from purging what they still owe to a not very well understood Locke". But we could have done with much more on, for example, the primary/secondary quality distinction, or Locke's critique of innate ideas, each of which receives a scant half page.

When we come to G. Macdonald-Ross's essay on Leibniz we find nothing at all on innate ideas – no mention of Leibniz's important treatment of this topic in the *Nouveaux essais*. The reason for the omission is presumably to be found in Ross's stated desire to bring out Leibniz's status as a *Universalgenie* rather than a "philosopher" in the modern academic sense. Ross succeeds well in conveying the importance of Leibniz's achievements in mathematics and his interests in physics (for example his anticipation of the Bosovich force conception of matter). But the broad range of Leibniz's thought was surely in part linked to the fact that the very distinction between "philosophy" and "science" was not one which he himself would have recognized. So to tell us, as Ross does more than once, that the reasons for Leibniz's views (on the conservation of information, on the nature of space) were "metaphysical" rather than "scientific" seems obviously inappropriate – quite apart from the apparently bald acceptance of a distinction which, recent work in philosophy has, increasingly shown, to be less than clear-cut.

Anarchism's pedant

Don Locke

PETER H. MARSHALL
William Godwin
497pp. Yale University Press. £14.95.
0300 031750
MARILYN BUTLER (Editor)
Burke, Paine, Godwin and the Revolution Controversy
260pp. Cambridge University Press. £25
(paperback, £2.95).
0521 243866

When my own biography of Godwin appeared a few years back it began with a sentence which was out of date even before it was published. You would find *Political Justice*, I suggested, only in some dusty library corner. In fact you could buy it in paperback at your local bookstore, and the Godwin revival, which had gathered steam with John P. Clark's study of Godwin's philosophical anarchism, now continues with Peter Marshall's handsome and substantial biography, and Marilyn Butler's anthology, which rightly ranks Godwin third after Burke and Paine, in the revolution debate.

What inspired that unfortunate beginning was the thought that Godwin was a strangely neglected figure, known only through his contacts with literary figures such as Coleridge, Wordsworth, Lamb, Hazlitt and especially Shelley and Mary Shelley. It may even be that the more recent interest in Godwin personally is indirectly due to the even more fashionable interest in his first wife, Mary Wollstonecraft. But the man is worthy of attention in his own right, both for himself and for his theories. He may stand, as one commentator put it, among the smaller giants, but too often he has been treated as one of the taller pygmies.

There are, I think, three reasons why Godwin should be of interest. There are first his opinions, and especially his arguments, which deserve our attention precisely because they are arguments and not merely opinions. Godwin was not just a pioneer thinker, holding both anarchism and utilitarianism in a relatively pure form which allows both their strengths and their weaknesses to shine through. He also backed up those rather simple-minded theories with more sophisticated arguments, which go to the very heart of their appeal.

Second, there is the story of Godwin's times. The 1790s are now well recognized as a pivotal period in British no less than European politics, their contribution to political thought so deep and so pervasive that, once we are familiar with the great debate over the French Revolution, subsequent controversies can come to seem mere summer repeats. Moreover, as Mrs Butler's source book amply demonstrates, it was a time when people in the first flush of enthusiasm tended naturally to passionate extremes, so that later debates seem not only familiar but jaded. Many excerpts from *Burke, Paine, Godwin and the Revolution Controversy* are best read aloud, preferably from an upstairs balcony window. Even Thelwall, to his enemies a raving demagogue, can sound a model of sobriety alongside Coleridge.

Third, there is the man himself. Godwin was, to be sure, a pedant, excitable at first, later merely dull. Had he lived today he would surely have been what Lamb jokingly called him: the Professor. And after its exciting start, his story is first a depressing, then a dreary one – how much better it would read, had he only died forty years before! But what is of interest is the relationship between personal biography, political history and his own developing theories. Philosophers – and Godwin himself was no exception – like to think that they deal in eternal truths, immune to the chance accidents of time and place. Perhaps we are more aware now than we once were of the ways in which context can influence what is seen as a philosophical problem, let alone its solution. But the impact of personal experience on philosophical theory has seldom been documented, perhaps because the lives of most philosophers lack the necessary drama. But Godwin is an exception, his life and eventually his philosophy turned upside down by the twin calamities of Mary Wollstonecraft's death and the political triumph of conservative opinions.

To write about Godwin's changing theories, as affected by both personal and political his-

tory, one needs an authoritative and up-to-date academic biography, and since none existed when I was writing, I found that, almost without realizing it, I was attempting one myself. The book I needed then exists now. Marshall's *William Godwin* is a comprehensive and scholarly, if somewhat pedestrian, account of the man, his writings and his doings, fully informed by recent research, and with a clear sense of the personal origins of Godwin's thought. Unlike John Clark, moreover, Marshall is fully aware of the development of Godwin's ideas as he wrote and rewrote his major work, *Political Justice*. But what he understates, is the extent to which Godwin not merely developed but actually abandoned his original position; and this despite Godwin's own admission that he was viciously persuaded by reason, that "every four or five years I look back astonished at the stupidity or folly of which I had a short time before been the dupe."

The reason, I suspect, is that Marshall is rather too inclined to take Godwin at his own word. It is, to take a very different example, dangerous to accept at face value claims made in a begging letter, and referring to a period thirty years before. Similarly, the fact that the same broad humanist and rationalist themes run through Godwin's writings until the end by no means ensures that this philosophical position is unchanged. On the contrary, the fact that Godwin gradually abandons, one by one, the major arguments of *Political Justice*, means that his original philosophy cannot survive, even if Godwin himself can still be found clinging grimly to the wreckage. Marshall sees Godwin's own views as substantially unchanged, but though the conclusions may remain the same, there is by the end little left to support them.

What is also lacking in Marshall's account is a sense of excitement, an excitement which in the 1790s was Godwin's own. For that we might turn instead to Butler's anthology. More focused, but therefore less varied, than A. E. Rodway's *Godwin and the Age of Transition* more than thirty years ago, it is intended primarily for students of English prose style, which in this case means political rhetoric. In principle the idea of selected readings seems excellent. The revolution debate was probably the most spirited, and certainly the most significant, war of words in all British history, both for its political and its literary content; and in an age before sub-editors, when writers tended to the verbose and the repetitive, it seems sensible to begin with excerpts which can give some flavour of the whole.

In practice, however there are problems. It is of course inevitable that some readers will regret the omission of a favourite passage. Yet is surely astonishing that there is nothing here from the First Part of Paine's *Rights of Man*; and some selections, most notably from Wollstonecraft's *Rights of Woman*, and an apparently pointless opening excerpt from the redoubtable Horne Tooke, are too brief to give a fair impression. To compensate there are surprises: Cobbett, for example, cast in the unexpected role of defender of a sound British riot, especially when directed against the Francophile tendency of Dr Priestley.

Moreover, anyone with a serious interest in the period will surely want to read the originals if not in full then at least at length, while the beginner will probably need more guidance to the political background. The introductions to each selection are pitched at exactly the right level. But the introductory Essay will be of interest only to those who already know the material well; what is missing, and needed, is an overview to present the political debate as what it was: a political debate.

As regards Godwin, however, it can be misleading to see him only in this context. According to Butler, *Political Justice* is best seen as a reply to Burke, and – astonishingly, in the light of some other selections in this volume – as introducing a "bitterly divisive note". But Godwin himself saw his book as belonging above the debate, not in it, as setting the principles of politics on an immutable basis; and as a work not of political controversy but of political and philosophical theory. It lies not third to Burke and Paine, but first. The real tragedy of William Godwin is that the best did not prove immutable after all, not for Godwin himself,

All 2,000 years of it

Jasper Ridley

KENNETH O. MORGAN (Editor)
The Oxford Illustrated History of Britain
640pp, with black-and-white and colour
photographs. Oxford University Press. £15.
0 19 822684 5

This is the latest in a long line of books which tell the history of England in the past two thousand years. It is the work of a team. The editor, Kenneth O. Morgan, states that "such a collective approach is inescapable, since the days when one compendious mind such as Trevelyan's could have the capacity and the confidence to treat all aspects of British history with equal ease probably died with the Liberal intelligentsia some time after 1914. It is certainly neither practicable nor desirable, now that Renaissance men have vanished from the earth." Instead, in this book, each period is "examined in depth by a specialist working in that field".

In view of this, it is surprising that there are so many errors. Edward III was not aged nineteen and already a parent in 1327; he was fourteen until November, and did not become a parent till 1330. There is not the slightest reason to believe that it was Margaret Beaufort who urged Henry VIII to marry Catherine of Aragon, whom she had always disliked. After the battle of Flodden (which was fought on September 9, not September 7, 1513), Henry VIII's sister Margaret did not safeguard his interests in Scotland for twenty years; she was deposed as regent and driven from the country within two years. We are told that James II's forces were finally crushed at the battle of Killiecrankie, which was in fact a victory for James's men. Marx was not led "fancifully to see Britain as being in the forefront of the revolutionary apocalypse"; on the contrary, he believed that Britain was the only country in Europe where the transition to Socialism could be accomplished without revolution, by legal and peaceful means.

Everyone reading the account of the trial of the seven bishops would interpret it as meaning that the trial took place in 1687 during the period of "Tory complacency", before the birth of James II's son in June 1688 caused this complacency to turn to "stunned horror" — not twenty days after the birth of the Prince, at the height of the political storm caused by both the birth and the trial, and on the very day when seven prominent persons invited William of Orange to invade England. And is John Morrell being naive or humorous when he calls this "inviting William of Orange to come to England, suitably protected with armed men, to remonstrate with James?"

It is probably inevitable that minor mistakes should occur in every history book; but "ten

historians, all distinguished authorities in their field", should have avoided some of the worst ones. The omissions are even more surprising than the errors. In a book of over 200,000 words, there is virtually nothing about the contents of Magna Carta, Simon de Montfort's Parliament, or the campaign to abolish the slave trade.

The omissions would not be so serious if this were a History of England; but it is a "History of Britain", and though we are told that the ten authors include three Welshmen and two Scots, the editor's claim that it deals with the history of the two islands, and not of England alone, is not justified. In a book of 429 pages of printed text, there are only nine pages on Scotland. While we have thirteen pages on the Reformation in England, there is only one extraordinary paragraph on the Reformation in Scotland: "Mary Tudor's death unleashed new French intervention in Scotland; there was sporadic fighting enlivened only by Mary of Guise's jest 'Where is now John Knox's God? My God is stronger than his, yea, even in Fife'." Who would believe from this that there had been a Protestant revolution in Scotland, and that within a few months of Mary of Guise's death, John Knox's God had defeated hers in Fife and everywhere else, thanks to the decisive military intervention of English troops — an intervention which changed the course of English, Scottish and European history? The great struggle between the Crown and the Kirk in Scotland in 1660-90 is dealt with in one sentence, though there are eight pages on the corresponding period in England.

This is not only a political history. There are sections on the economy, finance, law, population, medicine, architecture, and social habits throughout the centuries. This would give the book a very desirable balance if it were a History of England; but there is nothing whatever about the economy, finance, law or architecture of Scotland. The works of Chaucer, Gower, Shakespeare, and many other English writers are discussed; and there are references to the sixteenth and seventeenth-century Welsh authors, Sir John Price, Humphrey Llwyd, John Owen, Sion Dafydd Rhys, and John Davies of Mallwyd. But there is nothing about William Dunbar or Sir David Lindsay, though Robert Burns, Adam Smith and Carlyle are mentioned.

It is a nicely produced book, with illustrations on nearly every page. Here again there is a staggering national bias: of 284 illustrations, only five are of Scotland — or nine, if we include a cartoon of a Scot in London, a photograph and a portrait of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert at Balmoral, and "The Monarch of the Glen". But there will be many readers who will not notice, or mind, the mistakes and omissions; and there is no reason why the book should not sell well and give enjoyment to its readers.

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Taking the plunge

Jeremy Catto

NICHOLAS ORME
Early British Swimming, 558c-AD 1719: With
the first swimming treatise in English, 1595
215pp. University of Exeter. £3.
0 839 89 135 8

Renaissance education consisted of a good deal more than learning the classics. It encouraged gentlemen to take a rational or systematic attitude to the practical arts: politics, manners, warfare, medicine, law, geography or navigation, to name a few; stimulated the writing of guidebooks which purported to set the useful arts on a sound footing and define their place in the scheme of knowledge. Nicholas Orme's investigation of swimming in England is really an edition of Beveridge Digby's *Art of Swimming* (1587) in an early English translation, one of the first expositions of a minor art to be presented to the European public. Digby has not been completely neglected in modern times, but his *Art* deserves this further recognition as a stage in the broadening of book-learning from the theoretical to the useful and the character-forming studies. Not that Digby saw swimming as part of some Olympic *palestra*; his

justification of it was strictly utilitarian. It "preserveth the precious life of men amidst the furious billows of the lawless waters" and as such was comparable with medicine.

Dr Orme looks back to the fortunes of the art in Britain since one of Caesar's soldiers took to the water during the first Roman expedition of 55 BC. Naturally the evidence is sparse, but it is clear enough that a good number of men could swim, regarding it as one of the skills of war and self-defence. Curiously, he concludes, it was more highly thought of by the Anglo-Saxons, who sang of Beowulf's exploits at the bottom of the sea, than by Norman knights. After 1066 a gentleman only entered the water by misadventure; splashing his way back to the shore in comic rage, like Malory's Sir Palomides. The knight, however, was not necessarily typical in Norman or Angevin England, even in the army: there were plenty of foot-soldiers to keep alive the old English art of swimming. It was a mark of Edward II's plebeian tastes that he preferred swimming with a company of sailors to the society of his peers. Digby recorded a number of technical terms like the "roach-turn" out of popular usage. It may have been a new subject for written instruction but its practice, at least among boys and men, was probably known everywhere.



"Coronation reentry, Cheltenham, Somerset, May 1937", reproduced from Edwin Smith: Photographs 1935-1971 (253pp. Thames and Hudson. £18. 0 500 54100 0) which will be reviewed in a future issue of the TLS.

The ailing body politic

Roger Lockyer

HOWARD TOMLINSON (Editor)
Before the English Civil War: Essays on early
Stuart politics and government
222pp. Macmillan. £15 (paperback, £5.95).
0 333 30898 0
JOYCE LEE MALCOLM
Caesar's Due: Loyalty and King Charles 1642-
1646
256pp. Royal Historical Society. £11.50.
0 901050 90 3

Although centenaries are in fashion, one has passed unnoticed, for it was exactly one hundred years ago that the revised edition of Samuel Rawson Gardiner's *History of England 1603-42* completed publication. This was a work of such profound scholarship that it immediately established itself as the authorized version. In recent years, however, it has come under increasingly critical survey, particularly in its interpretation of puritanism and the role of Parliament, but although its authority has been shaken, there is no agreement as yet upon a revised version. Non-specialists must therefore depend upon collections of essays by historians working in the field, of which the volume edited by Howard Tomlinson is the latest to appear.

After a useful historiographical introduction by the editor, Patrick Collinson kicks off with an essay on the Hampton Court Conference which is a model of its kind. The Conference, argues Collinson, was a round-table discussion rather than a confrontation, and is best regarded as an epilogue to Elizabethan disputes about the nature of the Church of England rather than a prologue to seventeenth-century ones. The implication that the problems of the 1630s were largely created by Charles I and his archbishop, Laud, is touched on by Kevin Sharpe, who discusses the Personal Rule, but he sees the King as concerned above all with the restoration and maintenance of order in both church and state, and he calls attention to the considerable measure of success achieved by royal policies.

Simon Adams, dealing with the unjustly neglected topic of foreign policy, maintains that by abandoning Elizabeth's anti-Spanish attitude and working towards a marriage alliance with Spain that might well entail a concerted attack upon that bastion of Protestantism, the United Provinces, the early Stuarts created tensions within the body politic that seriously weakened it. There is much to be said for this thesis, and for the skillful way in which it is developed, but historians of foreign policy must beware of the temptation of seeking a single, overriding explanation for what were all too often ad hoc responses to a constantly changing situation. And although Adams is usually reliable, he is mistaken in saying that the financing of Mansfeld's expedition was contrary to the terms of the 1624 subsidy act.

David Thomas's discussion of early Stuart finance is conservative to a fault. He gives insufficient weight to the widespread demand for a relaxation of financial stringency after the death of the tight-fisted Elizabeth and he ignores the considerable measure of success eventually achieved by James I in reducing the cost of the royal household. In real terms, Mak-

ing allowance for the massive inflation of the sixteenth century, James was no more spendthrift than Henry VII, and by comparison with his fellow monarchs on the Continent he was model of good husbandry. The chief problem with which he and his successor had to contend was the under-endowment of the crown, but only Parliament could remedy this situation, and its unwillingness to do so was, as Thomas rightly observes, "a major failure" on its part. The explanation for its attitude is given by Conrad Russell, who emphasizes that Parliament, in the early Stuart period, was an occasional assembly, prepared to grant only occasional supply. Members of the Commons, who had constituency opinion behind them, as well as several centuries of tradition, insisted that the crown must continue to "live of its own" and shied away from the idea of regular taxation. But by sticking their heads in the sand they merely demonstrated their irrelevance and stimulated the development of prerogative fiscalism. In Russell's words, "when things cannot continue as they have been, conservatism becomes a force for instability".

Joyce Lee Malcolm's book attempts to establish how much support Charles I enjoyed during the course of the Civil War. She has much to say of interest, particularly about the disastrous impact of Charles's employment of Roman Catholic officers and also his failure to ensure the maintenance of discipline in the royalist armies. But not all Mrs Malcolm's arguments are equally convincing. This is partly because they have been overtaken by subsequent studies: the Clubmen movements, for instance, have come under close scrutiny lately, and it has been shown that they cannot be conveniently slotted into the categories of "King" and "Parliament". But Mrs Malcolm also erodes confidence in her judgments by an increasingly partisan approach, for somewhere along the way, and whether or not she realizes it, she has enlisted under the black-and-gold banner of Parliament. All too often she accepts as reliable evidence which comes from a biased Parliamentary source, and where there is legitimate room for doubt about motivation she always comes down against the King. It was Charles's intransigence, she assures us, that wrecked the Uxbridge negotiations, ignoring the fact that the war party was in the ascendancy at Westminster and that the only terms they were ready to accept were, in effect, unconditional surrender.

Mrs Malcolm may well be right in insisting that the King's cause was not popular with the common people, but we need more detailed studies before we can be sure of this or say why it was so. There is no doubt, of course, that the political nation was divided into King's men, Parliamentarians, and Neutralists, and much the same seems true of the "middling sort". What is now becoming apparent is that the lower levels of English society were also split, and that husbandmen and artisans did not invariably follow the lead of their social superiors or wash their hands of the whole business. As so often, research is demonstrating that apparently simple problems, like that of why men committed themselves to one side or the other, are complex and not susceptible of easy solution. Mrs Malcolm deserves praise for her pioneering effort, but it remains an open question whether she has really given Caesar his due.

A Chorus From Oedipus Rex

O thrilling voice of Zeus

sent from Apollo's golden shrine
with what intent toward us?

I tremble I faint I fail
terror racks my soul

O Delian healer to whom my cries
from this my abyss of despair arise

what fate unknown until now
or lost in the past and renewed

drawn from the revolving years

will you make ours?

O speak o tell us immortal voice

To Athena daughter of Zeus
and her sister Artemis
and Apollo of burning arrows
triple guardians of Thebes

I call

If ever before in time past

you saved us from plague and defeat

come back to us now and save

The plague invades
no knowledge saves
birth pangs of women
bear dead their children
life on life sped
to the land of the dead
birds wing on wing
struck down from their flying
to the parched earth
by the marksman death

O Delian healer hear my prayer
star of hope in my night of despair

Grant that this god who without clash of sword on shield
fills with cries of our dying Thebes he makes his battlefield

turn back in flight from us

be made to yield

driven by great gales favouring our side

to the far Thracian waters wave on wave
where none found haven ever but his grave

O Zeus come with thy lightning to us
save

And come back Bacchus

half gold-bound and cheeks flame-red

whom the Bacchantae worship and the maenads led
by his bright torch held high

revelling again among us Bacchus and make death
the god whom gods and men most hate lie dead

STEPHEN SPENDER

The tradesman's craft

Robert Barnard

JANET MORGAN
Agatha Christie: A biography
393pp. Collins. £12.95.
0 00216330 6

The image that Sir Max and Lady Mallowan presented in their later years was that of the elderly upper-middle-class English couple *par excellence*: she weighty, equine and vaguely jolly; he upright, military and distinctly country squire. Such an image, like the façade presented to the world by Bertram's Hotel, was misleading in the extreme. The couple, in fact, had between them only one quarter of English blood: Max, knighted for his services to archaeology, had exclusively Continental parentage, while Agatha Christie (like Raymond Chandler, though neither would thank anyone for linking them) was Anglo-American. And beneath her stout-shoed exterior Christie was the possessor of the sort of mind that is generally thought of as un-English: it was abstract, objective, needle-sharp.

Janet Morgan's biography has been written with the co-operation of the Christie family, and with access to Christie's own papers and letters, which provide many of the delights of the book. The main outlines of her life are familiar from her *Autobiography*, which may have been impressionistic about dates but seems to have been essentially truthful in things that mattered. We already have a clear picture of Christie's father ("a very agreeable man", his daughter called him), with his gift for genial idleness, and of her intelligent, scatter-brained mother, a woman who loved unorthodox ideas and entertained as many as possible of them simultaneously. We know of the family's decline from high-bourgeois prosperity — five courses at dinner, with a choice for each course — to a life of genteel shifts and dependence after her father's death.

What now seems the most important aspect of Christie's childhood is the way it centred on books. With her sister and brother both much older, and with no regular schooling, this was inevitable, and something that she herself never regretted. She emerged from it with the most subtle and complete understanding of the relationship of writer, printed page and reader. She knew exactly what the reader expected of light fiction, the manner in which he would read it, and the preconceptions he brought to it. This knowledge is the basis of many of her best efforts at bamboozlement, and it is a tribute to her professionalism that when she adapted her books for the stage she as often as not rethought the plot through from the beginning, even changing the solution, because she understood that what worked on the page probably would not work on the stage.

Christie made two apparently imprudent marriages. The first, to Archie Christie, contracted in the first months of the 1914-18 war, seems to have jogged along very happily for some years, and then ended in disaster in her ten-day disappearance in 1926. This was the most sensational event of her life, though not necessarily the most important. Its treatment inevitably forms one of the high-spots of this biography, since so much of Christie's life was the unexciting business of writing a great many books. Dr Morgan treats the disappearance in two parts, first showing the reactions of her circle and the Press, then tracing as far as possible the simple and distressing truth of what happened to Agatha. The first of these chapters would be highly entertaining were it not for the second, for the Christie disappearance was one of the milestones on the downward path that has made the British popular press the silliest and nastiest in the world. Policemen and literary pundits pontificated on the flimsiest of grounds, and Dorothy Sayers joined in the "Great Sunday Hunt for Mrs Christie" — not a matter, I imagine, that even the doughty Sayers cared to discuss with her contemporary on the reader. From its cool, beautifully paced and consistently entertaining narrative one gets a clear view of Christie's career and personality. What, though, of Christie the writer? It is on details of the books that Janet Morgan is weakest. The writing of the short story "Witness for the Prosecution" is put at 1948, when in fact it was published in 1933; Mrs Dane Catdrop is misspelled and put in the wrong book.

she packed away her mementoes of him she included a cutting from Psalm 55: "For it is not an open enemy, that hath done me this dishonour: for then I could have borne it . . . But it was even thou, my companion: my guide, and mine own familiar friend."

The most important event in Christie's life was her second marriage, to a man in his mid-twenties, fourteen years younger than herself. Her almost incredulous delight at the success of this marriage permeates the letter to Max quoted in this book. Understandably uncertain whether she should accept his proposal, she seems to have gained confidence even by the time that they were first apart. When, at the end of the honeymoon, Max went off to Ur while she returned to London, she wrote to him:

Do you know, Max, it is the first time for several years that I have arrived in England without a feeling of sick misery — I always had it — as though I'd escaped from things by going abroad to sunshine — and then came back to them — to memories shadowed and all the things I wanted to forget. But this time — no.

During a more prolonged separation, when Max was in the Near East during the war, she wrote: "What a change now from the unhappy forlorn person you met in Baghdad. You have done everything for me." She never entirely lost her joy and gratitude at this fortune, nor, perhaps, her regret at the disparity in their ages, which surely lies behind her hatred of unflattering photographs, her self-consciousness at her unwieldiness and her need of "elephant knickers". The hot lobster *à la crème* and cups of clotted cream that punctuate this biography suggest that she did little about it.

From Christie's *Autobiography* we get a sense of a cosy, slightly disorganized, mildly opinionated woman. Behind that, one always suspected, there lurked a will of steel. For this suspicion she has only herself to blame, since no writer more consistently taught her readers to mistrust the surface of her texts. Nevertheless, the conjecture gains no support from this biography, and one feels by the end that Christie was if anything too easy-going, for example with publishers and agents. Morgan has an admirably clear chapter on Christie's financial affairs, but one is left at the end feeling that if, in the 1960s, when she was the world's best-selling writer, Christie was still in financial straits, then she might legitimately have asked if she had been getting the best financial advice.

What comes through most strongly and surprisingly from this book is not Christie of the cold blue eyes, but Christie the woman of charm and humour. Sometimes the humour is a matter of irresistibly breezy narrative, as in the long letter to Max retelling the events of a long hold-up on the Orient Express, with some of the people who were later to be subjected to a very special hold-up organized by the writer herself. Sometimes it is sharper, almost black, as in her account of the audience at Max's 1966 Princeton lecture (when she was herself seventy-six):

Everyone seemed very rich, evening dress and they put on white gloves to go out to the lecture and all nice but incredibly aged and ailing. The husbands were mostly ill in bed or in hospital and everyone I talked to was either stone deaf or paralytic, or blind, and a dear old lady hung over with deaf-aid, nearly blind and eighty-eight; accompanied us to the lecture and insisted on supporting me in case I fell down.

The humour permeates even her exasperation, as when Collins ("such a thick-headed lot") committed the unforgivable sin of not only putting Poirot on the dust-jacket of *The Labours of Hercules*, but of setting him in the midst of a group of mock-classical sculptures. It suggests Poirot going naked into the bath! All sorts of obscene suggestions are being made by my family . . . Put statuary on the cover, but make clear it is statutory — not Poirot gone peculiar in Hyde Park!

This is an old-fashioned kind of biography: it is not too long, it does not indulge in amateur psychoanalysis, it does not force interpretation on the reader. From its cool, beautifully paced and consistently entertaining narrative one gets a clear view of Christie's career and personality. What, though, of Christie the writer? It is on details of the books that Janet Morgan is weakest. The writing of the short story "Witness for the Prosecution" is put at 1948, when in fact it was published in 1933; Mrs Dane Catdrop is misspelled and put in the wrong book.

Christie

The very pink of propriety

Gillian Avery

JANE AIKEN BODGE
The Private World of Georgeette Heyer
216pp. Bodley Head. £10.95.
0370 305086

the writing of *After the Funeral* is postdated by several years, and so on. Some of the judgments, too, have an odd ring to me, as when Morgan praises the dialogue Christie gives to "students, crazy ideologues, messy adolescents or eleventh dynasty Egyptians" - just the area, surely, where her writing is at its most embarrassing ("You've got a lot of them here in England - crushed old die-hards - useless worn-out symbols of a decayed era. And, my God, they've got to go. There's got to be a new world. Do you get me - a new world, see?"). Similarly she seems to devote much too much time to the deplorable last books, which she claims are interesting by virtue of the number of ideas Christie plays with in them. On the other hand, Morgan is excellent on the planning of the earlier books, and she disentangles from the writer's chaotic jottings on scraps of paper and tail-ends of exercise books the evolution of many of her best ideas. We get the vivid sense here of a mind that, in all the commonplace routines and encounters of her life, played with the deceptive potential of everyday things. "One is a tradesman", Christie said in the *Autobiography*, but what we see here is the craftsman, and Morgan displays her craftsmanship to great advantage.

Christie, it is always said, was reticent, both as woman and writer. In fact, she wrote at least three works of autobiography, and one of them, the fictionalized *Unfinished Portrait*, was published only a few years after the collapse of her first marriage, with which it deals. Even in her day-to-day life her shyness could evaporate once she was inside a theatre: "I am very theatrical now, and call all the most frightful people 'Darling'." Some may feel that the problem for Morgan was not her reticence, but her lack of development, again both as woman and as writer. Certainly her opinions seem to have formed early and not to have altered substantially, and some of them, for example on capital punishment and feminism, are calculated to raise radical hackles today.

Yet Christie has been the most popular writer of our century. The readers who buy her in such vast numbers are showing proper appreciation of her fecundity, her consistency, her dazzling variety within the limits of her form. With *The Mysterious Affair at Styles* (1920) she established all the conventions and principles of the close-circle puzzle. By the time of *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd* (1926) her mastery was complete, and she went on for the next quarter of a century writing brilliant permutations in a series of whodunnits that hardly includes a single dud. That terrifying childhood dream of the sinister Gun Mat in which he might turn out - "oh, horror!" - to be Mumsey was paying splendid dividends in the Least Likely Suspect formula. Her wonderful productivity will not prevent tremors of interest among Christie fans that there are still things unpublished; two radio plays that sound distinctly interesting; a late play that is less so; and a handful of short stories that have not attained volume form in this country owing to the ban on publishing "Three Blind Mice" while *The Mousetrap* is running - presumably an eternal interdiction.

Morgan mentions the criticism that Christie did not develop as a writer, but one cannot feel that development is a term of much relevance when discussing popular literature. The writer finds out what pleases the public, then goes on supplying it as long as they are pleased. Certainly one can feel grateful that Christie did not take the road "From the Detective Story to the Crime Novel", as the subtitle to Julian Symonds' *Bloody Murder* has it: it is a road that has led to a great many foothills and very few peaks. Even the quality of Christie's writing, so frequently attacked as flat or uninvolved, can be defended: this bald reportage is an essential part of the trick, making us trust the narration when it is in fact at its most tricky. Read a second time it bristles with life, and cunning as we register what we were not told, or what we were told confusingly. Escapist? Divorced from reality? Perhaps all popular literature is. Yet the oddly moving story Morgan tells of the prisoners in Buchenwald who constructed and acted in their own version of (of all books) *Ten Little Niggers* suggests that they perceived a tangential relation to reality, their reality, which was perhaps more stimulating than any that more realistic fiction could have afforded them.

A taste for historical romance - which was based on a view of history that after the Regency period we entered the modern age - was symptomatic of the state of illusion that the middle-brow, unreflective middle classes were living in in the 1930s. Hitler was in power, war was rushing towards us, but there we were immersed in stories about bygone and not particularly edifying aristocrats. All the popular fiction seemed to be set in an upper-class never-never land - Dornford Yates, John Buchan, Wodehouse, A.E.W. Mason, P.C. Wren. The criminals were gentlemen - Raffles and the Saint - as were the detectives, when they weren't noblemen. Georgeette Heyer, whose books equally suited my father and my schoolgirl contemporaries, never to my knowledge hinted that there was any poverty or unrest in the eighteenth and early nineteenth-century world that she depicted in nearly forty novels. Occasionally one of her exquisites wrinkles a delicate nostril and exclaims "faugh!" as he steps into a particularly insalubrious inn, but there is no mention of the way of life of the masses who do not possess curlicues and abigails and coats by Scott or Schultz, let alone any reference to Tom Paine and his disciples. We are shown a world where the aristocracy are the only beings of interest, happily ministered to by the lower orders who exist solely for their support and convenience, and the bourgeois are pretentious buffoons where they are not downright nasty (though they are never allowed to be sublimely wicked; that is the privilege of the Duke of Avon or the Marquis of Vidal). Georgeette Heyer was not unusual in this; it was the fashion of the time. Readers would not have identified with the boorish and sycophantic middle-class characters in Heyer's novels: they assumed that if they had lived in Regency times they would have been frequenting White's and Almack's, and from time to time buying duelling pistols at Manton's Shooting Gallery.

Schoolgirl light reading in the 1930s and during the war seemed largely historical: romance in costume was considered peculiarly adapted to their needs and was prominent in school libraries and there was a feeling that a historical setting was both educational and edifying. The works of Harrison Ainsworth (who for some curious reason was much reprinted where Wilkie Collins was not) were very much school library fodder, and the accounts of tortures in the Tower of London, plague pits and supernatural happenings mildly amusing. To those who discovered her, D.K. Broster made a very powerful appeal. Patricia Beer was one of these who identified with the Jacobite cause because of *The Flight of the Heron*. "Looking back I feel sad. The feelings it roused in me were not about anything real yet I have experienced nothing stronger since", she wrote in *Mrs Beer's House*, an account of her youth. Broster, whose output was only a quarter of Heyer's, never attained a tenth of her popularity. She wrote in a very different style. Whereas Heyer's books are light-hearted skirmishes with love or with adventure, as deftly constructed as any detective story (she wrote those very competently too), Broster's books betrayed deep feeling - passionate loyalty to a cause, the hero-worship of an older man by a younger. And they often ended tragically, whereas Heyer distanced herself from emotion or tragedy.

Perhaps part of the attraction of Georgeette Heyer was that her novels are all optimistic: even the apparently most vicious men are capable of reform. In *These Old Shades* we meet the Duke of Avon, a languid and, we are told, licentious man of the world, a patron of the gaming table, up to the neck in unregretted amours. He himself says: "My reputation is damaged beyond repair. I come of vicious stock, and I have brought no honour to the name I bear." To no woman have I been faithful; behind me lies scandal upon scandal. I have wealth but I squandered one fortune in my youth and won my present fortune at play." But when the red-headed Lord

whom he adopts as his page turns out to be a girl (and Léonie), he treats her with the greatest decorum and expects decorous behaviour from her. Eventually, her true, aristocratic parentage being irrefutably established, he marries her saying, "Since you will stoop to wed me, I pledge you my word that you shall not in the future have cause to regret it." No reader doubts that he will keep his word, and when we meet him again in *The Devil's Cub* it is clear that though his authority is as awful as ever and the thought of his displeasure unnerves or even terrifies all about him, he has been a blameless husband. It is now the turn of his son to be wild and reckless. He kills a footpad in the first chapter, desperately wounds an acquaintance who accuses him of cheating at cards in the fourth ("Damn you, Vidal, I believe you have killed him!" Rupert said angrily. "I'm very nearly sure of it, dear uncle," said the Marquis") and flees to France with a girl whom he supposes to be a vulgar trollop on the make. Only when she turns out to be a "cit" but not a trollop (taking after her father's gentlemanly forebears rather than her mother) he is appalled: "I don't ruin persons of your quality." Thereafter he makes careful arrangements so that the proprieties shall not be offended, and when after many misunderstandings and hair's breadth escapes she agrees to be his wife (having to witness a duel fought over her with rapiers first) she appears to be confident that she is marrying a reformed character. Similarly at least two novels, *The Foundling* and *Sprig Muelin*, feature a duke and a baronet respectively who encounter deliciously silly young persons at large, and conscientiously insist on being their protectors (against the giddy creatures' wishes) enduring every sort of inconvenience and misunderstanding in order to turn them over to suitable authority.

For underneath all the dash and sparkle, the duelling and curlicue-racing, the gaming, the disguises and elopements, Georgeette Heyer was the very pink of propriety. She supported marriage (her own was very happy) and she was dismayed when her son proposed to marry the estranged wife of one of his colleagues. The stability she gave to the world she described and her belief in its institutions seem now to belong to some remote dreamland, but was a commonplace in books at least until the 1950s; our schoolgirl reading made us feel very safe in spite of the war around us.

But she never intended to write for schoolgirls and seems to have been dismayed at their enthusiasm. She would have liked to think that her readers were fastidious and cultivated men rather than women - barristers and dons and such - who could appreciate the accuracy of her historical detail, her wide reading, and she seems to have had the greatest contempt for most of her fans (the few who were introduced to her had to be warned not to mention her books) - the societies in America who dressed up and acted Heyer; the writers of gushing letters. The fact that Lord Justice Somervell bequeathed his collection of her novels to the library of the Inner Temple must have been very gratifying.

There can be few popular writers who maintained such a high standard of professionalism over all her output. Her plots are tours-de-force, gathering in pace as the work proceeds with an ever-present element of surprise, until in the final chapters we have all the cast assembled, ejaculating their explanations and exclamations like the finale of some Rossini opera. She took immense pains with her historical detail, never obtruding it, but weaving it into the background so that one dates the books from some casually mentioned fact, like the death of Princess Charlotte. If she names the brand of polish that a valet uses for his master's Hessian boots one can be sure she has got it right. She was more interested in such details than in political history. She had never, for instance, heard of Lord Rockingham, and having bestowed his title upon the hero of *Bath Tangle* had (loudly lamenting, for she was proud of the fittingness of her names) to substitute the name of Rotherham. She rarely used historical characters. *The Infamous Army* is one of the few exceptions, and though held in esteem by some of the perceptive (the description of the battle of Waterloo is accurate enough for it to have been used at Sandhurst for lectures on military history) the Duke of Wellington himself does not seem as solid as

some of her fictitious characters. She did not herself consider she was writing romance, though it is not clear what else she thought her books were. Perhaps comedies of manners; certainly there is comedy and certainly they are mannered.

Despite the title of her book, Jane Aiken Hodge is able to show very little of Georgeette Heyer's private world. All that is known of her childhood and youth is contained on two pages. She was born in 1902 in Wimbledon, the daughter of George Heyer who, it is surmised, was the formative influence of her early years, though even this has to be inferred from her novels. She never went to university, and when she was nineteen wrote her first book, *Black Moth*, a dashing story of a gentleman highwayman who is really an earl in disguise and who, having taken the blame for his brother's dishonourable conduct has gone into hiding. It was originally made up to amuse her little brother Boris, and all her life she was to lavish tender care on her family. Indeed her worries about individual members of it and her fury about income tax matters occupied most of her thoughts when she was not writing, if we are to believe the correspondence quoted. She was successful from the very beginning of her career, and it was the income from her novels which supported her husband throughout his early days at the Bar. Their tastes were for the quiet simplicity that takes a great deal of money to support, and the British tax system being what it is, the more she wrote the more she had to write - which she did, savagely reviling the Inland Revenue and the various governments of her time for the ridiculous ways to which they put her money. But she would probably have written in any case; clearly she loved this world she had created, indeed one could say that this fictional dreamland was her private world though she took care that no serious feelings should obtrude.

Lacking anything much to say about Heyer's life, Mrs Hodge has concentrated on the novels, and discusses each one, demonstrating their admirable craftsmanship, their humour and strong dramatic line. Feeling perhaps that the subject is a rather lightweight one, the publishers have chosen to make a picture book out of it, throwing in lavish quantities of portraits of personalities of the Georgian period which sit rather oddly beside the occasional family snapshot, and prints of fashionable Regency life with somewhat faint-hearted captions such as "The Royal Academy Summer Exhibition . . . Like Jane Austen's, Heyer heroines were seldom particularly artistic or musical." But the book looks handsome, and one guesses it would have satisfied this most fastidious author.

LAWRENCE BLOCK
The Burglar Who Painted Like Mondrian
253pp. Gollancz. £7.95.
0575 03436X

Another fascinating episode from the adventures of the Raffles de nos jours, Bernie Rhodenbarr. Bernie keeps an antiquarian bookstore in Greenwich Village, has a lesbian girl-friend who washes dogs at the Poodle Parlor, and burgles in a gentlemanly way in his spare time. But lifting some of the best items from the stamp collection of John Charles Apple, a friend of the American Wild Turkey, lands him in an imbroglio involving, *inter alia*, two corpses, a brunette with rape fantasies, a wheelchair, and five fake Mondrians. The final explanation is a mite long-winded, but almost anything can be forgiven an author who is as ingeniously funny as Lawrence Block.

JOHN CROSBY
Men in Arms
221pp. Constable. £6.95.
009 4657408

Horatio Cassidy, an impecunious professor of medieval history with a romantic disposition who does odd jobs for the CIA, gets entangled in a \$26 million arms deal and ends up fighting off Arab terrorists, New York gangsters, and the US Navy. Well-written, with some good opening scenes and intriguing characters, but one *blazerrie* after another takes it well over the top by the end.

T. J. Binyon

Unconventional outings

Christopher Hawtree

RONALD FRAME
Winter Journey
174pp. Bodley Head. £7.95.
0370 306635

"Still crouching, he corkscrewed himself round. His white cotton-wool beard was pushed up on a wire over his head and a cigarette dangled out of his mouth; his gown was unbuttoned to show his string vest and a bush of black hair on his chest. A trap door was flapping open in another polar bear's bottom and he had his hand up inside, pulling out money. He wasn't being at all jovial: in fact he appeared to be quite upset about something." Whether this is the sort of thing that Betty Trask hoped to encourage with her generous best "conventional" novel will never be known. The incident, which takes place in the toy department at Harrods shortly before the Christmas of 1958, might lead one to expect rollicking farce, but it is only typical of the novel in its introduction of theme of deception and futile illusion. The sight of this hideous, cursing Santa Claus, as he frees the cash-eating animal of the toffees with which children have tried to poison it, is sufficient to drive the six-year-old Anneole Tomlinson back to her mother. The promise that she will be taken instead on another day to Derry and Tom's, where Santa Claus is said to be in a more amiable, generous mood, is futile. "I was disappointed and ashamed for her that she could imagine the silly, empty ritual of 'Father Christmas' was a pretence worth saving."

The female narrator of *Winter Journey*, cutting to and fro in time and space, presents a knowing child's view of domestic and public tragedy in a way that is never arch and, against the odds, manages to remain plausible. Having met at the time of the Festival of Britain, Anneole's parents' marriage reflects the brief hope of a new classless England: Simon, despite a modest upbringing in Surbiton, has risen to such eminence in the Foreign Office

that by the early 1960s he is usually serving abroad; Laura, whose shunned clergyman father has been confined to an asylum, stays behind, reads Ian Fleming and leads a life marked out by brand-names such as Worth, Asprey and Rayne.

More than a brief tale of misalliance and infidelity, the novel, looking back from the present, contains a number of enigmas which will only become clear later. The first pages reveal Simon's mysterious, treacherous behaviour and, it seems, his reappearance on an Aegean island. How it all fits together is revealed with the novel's gradual focus on the visit that mother and daughter make to Simon during the harsh winter of 1963, when he is working in Prague. "In those days she could say his name and it didn't sound like a curse", reflects the daughter, now aged ten. A brooding violence soon makes itself felt. As the family sit at breakfast in a hotel away from the Embassy, Simon alludes casually to Virginia Woolf and his wife explodes, "Virginia Woolf isn't of the remotest interest to me, thank you very much. I want my breakfast." Her voice started to rise. "I want my tea. I want white bread, not these -" she dropped some on the table - "bloody rolls!" It is a mild exchange in comparison with those that are to come, when the three of them set out on a motoring holiday across Europe.

Such is Ronald Frame's narrative control that this domestic acrimony becomes of a piece with the concealed photographs, A-Bombs, putative servants, armed soldiers and perilous minefields with which conventional spies are familiar. "In the event we didn't take any of the signposted feed roads into Innsbruck. I knew my father wasn't really attending at all. I saw the 'look' again - the sides of his mouth dragging, his eyes sunken and eyebrows pulled together. The little vein like a crinkly wire was throbbing ominously in his temple." Ronald Frame's novel more than fulfils the expectations aroused by the stories which he has published over the past few years. Whether it is conventional or not, *Winter Journey* is a decidedly individual creation, and makes one impatient for something on a larger scale.

Hereditary influences

Toby Fitton

LISA ST AUBIN DE TERAN
The Tiger
325pp. Cape. £8.95.
022402230X

Lucien Schmutter is heir apparent to a substantial estate in central Venezuela. Descended from an immigrant Black Forest peasant who won his lands through an ordeal by strength, his own father and brothers are commonplace, whoring, layabout gentry, and it is to his witch-like grandmother, "the Empress of the Orinoco", that he owes his intelligence and sensibility. By close attention to her capricious affections he comes to gain his inheritance, but at the price of being haunted by her for the rest of his life.

From her he learns endurance, herbal medicine and skill as a gambler, and she encourages him in architectural fantasy which becomes an obsession. As he grows up, his mastery of roulette enables him to build a stately pleasure dome in Caracas; his palace is full of architectural whimsy and run with prodigal hospitality, until an accidental bad run at the casino in South America to last month's dictator. Less elevated travels to Europe follow, then the hero returns to prolonged imprisonment on ill-explained but trumped-up charges, shades of the prison-house having been adversely anticipated throughout.

In the hands of a practised fantasist, such a plot, with innumerable ramifications, gives scope for some bizarre elaboration, not least in the contrast between the degradation of the prisoner and the extravagant cruelty of their masters. The poverty and hardships of the Schmutters are depicted in opulent detail. Lucien Schmutter's exquisite achievements as a millionaire poet are listed in all their apologetic

profusion. His grandmother Mía's skills as a herbalist produce catalogues of nostrums deployed with all the care of an absinthie-pocked 1800s poet listing semi-precious stones: "the hemlock and the ayapana and the marigold and hellebore and the amica. . .". Unfortunately a similar lavishness is applied to the grandmother's proclivities as a chaste as well as to her hereditary abilities as a healer. Each stroke of her nasty little thong on the wrists of her victims is all too lingeringly described. A character which might have been read as a Germanic Old Mother Riley taking pot-shots at the local vulture population with her pearl-handled revolver appears to have been written up for a more specialized market of cruel grandmother fetishists.

The "Tiger" of the title is a very strange bird. One is shot, on the family's Venezuelan property, by the young Lucien as a demonstration of his burgeoning manhood. Yet *panthera tigris* is asserted by the authorities to be exclusively Asiatic in its habitat. Perhaps it is *felix tigrina*, which is known in other parts of South America, a smaller beast but by no means discredited in a ceremonial initiation. A man-eating "Jaguar of the plains" is killed without too much zoological specificity, but more importantly the "tiger" symbolizes an ill-diagnosed tubercular or asthmatic affliction which complements the pallid Germanic appearance of the Schmutter dynasty. These hereditary respiratory troubles consort oddly with the prodigious of bodily strength the young Lucien displays, but they are conquered by the prodigious of mind the grandmaternal influence imparts, whether through sadism, witchcraft or naturopathy. Mía's Schmutter does not die so long as her memory endures to influence her favourite grandson in his grandiose career.

There was some feeling among critics that Miss St Aubin de Teran's last novel, *The Slow Train to Milan*, might become a cult novel. Those not already initiated might have their reservations about *The Tiger*.

Travelling light

David Montrose

WILLIAM BOYD
Stars and Bars
255 pp. Hamish Hamilton. £8.50.
0241 113431

After the sombre tones of *An Ice Cream War*, William Boyd has reverted, in his third novel, to the broad comedy of his first, *A Good Man in Africa*. Structurally, too, the novels are similar: in both, Boyd's hero is entrusted with a crucial assignment, only to be hampered by wildly proliferating complications. In *Stars and Bars*, the hero is Henderson Dore, an authority on the Impressionists who, pushing forty, has resolved to change his life and his shy, all-too-English self. To the first end, he has accepted a job with the fledgling New York branch of Mulholland, Melhuish, a London auction house; America, he hopes, will accomplish the second. The novel opens with Henderson's Englishness wholly intact after two months in New York. Except, that is, insofar as it has been affected by his simultaneous involvement with two alluring, imperious women: his former wife, Melissa, with whom he is discussing remarriage, and his mistress Irene.

The early chapters feature various episodes of culture shock: common currency in English "travel novels". In the space of twenty-four hours, Henderson is successively nonplussed by a streetcorner crazy, by American speech, American food (filet mignon in butterscotch sauce), American waiters and American cars. Boyd does, however, fashion enjoyable slapstick from what initially looks like an obligatory mugging. Walking Irene home after midnight, Henderson mistakes some returning moviegoers for hoodlums and launches into a panic-stricken frenzy of self-preservation that ends with Irene semi-conscious, his suit ruined, his credit cards strewn across the sidewalk.

The bulk of the novel, though, is devoted to Henderson's mission: a trip to a Deep Southern backwater to talk Loomis Gage, a reclusive millionaire, into letting Mulholland, Melhuish handle the proposed sale of his art collection: a coup that would land them a fat commission and, more importantly, "signal their arrival" on the New York scene. Much of the entertainment provided by *Stars and Bars* derives from the way Boyd embellishes this substantial storyline with a series of distractions, comic set-pieces and running gags. Henderson's fourteen-year-old stepdaughter-to-be, Bryant, invites herself along, inadvertently thwarting (or so it seems) his plan to find time for some dirty nights in Georgia with Irene. Then he meets the opposition of Freeborn, Gage's elder son:

"I think, to be fair, that I should inform you of a certain fact which has a bearing on your business." "What's that?" "That if you don't get your fuckin' ass out of this house by noon tomorrow I'm gonna bust yo' fuckin' head with it."

Something to say

John Melmoth

MALACHI WHITTAKER
The Crystal Fountain and other stories
179pp. Manchester: Carcanet. £6.95.
085635 5178

Malachi Whittaker (née Marjorie Olive Taylor) had sufficient flair to live down being described as "the Bradford Chekhov". Born in 1895, her first stories were published in *The Adelphi* by John Middleton Murry and she rapidly found a number of well-placed admirers. Edward Garnett, a publisher's reader, or at Jonathan Cape, accepted her first collection; Vita Sackville-West compared her work with that of Katherine Mansfield. During the late 1920s and the 1930s, she produced four volumes of short stories. In 1939 she announced that she had nothing further to say and for the last thirty-six years of her life she maintained a resolute silence.

The first new edition of Whittaker's work for nearly forty years contains twenty-five stories. Rarely longer than a few pages, they explore a variety of moods. "Sultan Jekker" conducts an uncompromisingly naturalistic inspection of a

The deeply insolvent Freeborn, who stands to inherit the paintings, has promised them to his creditors, Messrs Sereno and Gint, a pair of art dealers who are shadier than an eclipse. Braving this and subsequent threats, Henderson brings matters to an apparently successful conclusion. Inside an hour, though, Gage suffers a fatal heart attack, leaving Henderson with only an unwitnessed verbal agreement. Furthermore, Bryant announces her intention of running away to Kansas ("Girls can get married at twelve there") with Duane, the son of Gage's housekeeper.

Boyd achieves his best effects in the sideshows to this main action. The Gage household boasts some engaging originals, notably Beckman, the younger son, a subatomic physicist given to interminable reminiscences of his (entirely imaginary) service in Vietnam, and Freeborn's heavily pregnant wife, Shanda, whose inability to penetrate Henderson's accent obliges him to adopt a Dixie version of Mummersest: "Well, shucks, 'he began again, trying to recall his Huckleberry Finn and Ring Lardner. 'I reckon I jist plum done gone and forgot to ask you to do me a service, like, goshdamn it.'" Prominent among the comic scenes are the sight of Henderson making faces and mouthing obscenities at Gage's vociferously Anglophobic daughter whom he supposes, wrongly, to be blind, and the degeneration of Gage's funeral into an etymological dispute between various mourners. The funniest episodes take place outside Gage territory, in Atlanta's swiftest hotel, chosen by Henderson as the venue for a night with Irene. Henderson finally flits to New York where he is forced to hotfoot it through Manhattan in the rainy small hours, clad only in a cardboard box. For the first time, he fits in, passing as "just another fucking weirdo". The last scene - reminiscent of the indeterminate ending of Updike's *Rabbit, Run* - finds him fleeing a vengeful, pistol-packing Duane.

Stars and Bars adheres - as did *A Good Man in Africa* - to the conventions of the "accident-prone hero novel" as practised by Amis, Burgess, Sharpe *et al*, where the superior *An Ice Cream War* employed the form of a romantic adventure story while radically adapting the contents. Boyd has avoided well-worn areas: American campuses, Hollywood, the more sensational excesses of transatlantic life. But *Stars and Bars* remains a fairly traditional English travel novel; its "school of" air - the masters include Burgess, Lodge and Bradbury - extending to Boyd's mainstream prose, which is well written without being overtly "written". Of its type, *Stars and Bars* is more than competent, but less than outstanding. The theme of Henderson's fresh start is never really developed, the author's flights of comic invention, though regular, are seldom airborne for sustained periods. The novel will consolidate, rather than advance, William Boyd's reputation.

brutish *ménage à trois*, "The Music Box" exposes a husband's spite and exercise of power over a cowed wife and child, "Frost in April" and "The End of the Queue" deal in unrequited love, lost illusions and the indifference of fate. The majority of the protagonists are women. Some of the pieces are surprisingly frank; women admit their desires; calmly pursue their sexual advantage and are unruffled by the posturings and agonizings of their menfolk. The two most memorable stories depict women in the extremities of anxiety and madness. "The Wife" records the dread of dissolution which haunts a housewife every time her husband is away. Having abrogated all sense of self, she fears nothingness; she exists in a closeted terror of separation. "X" is a chilling tale of lunacy, delusions, incest and vampires.

Malachi Whittaker wrote with a coolness and precision that did nothing to invalidate a distinctive and tough-minded compassion. Of their kind, her stories are faultless; they scarcely indulge a superfluous word. Joan Hart (who wrote the introduction) and Carcanet are to be congratulated for this recovery of a forgotten talent. A second volume of stories and one of other writings is to follow.

John Melmoth

